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KRSHNA

A STUDY IN THE THEORY OF AVATARAS

BHAGAVAN DAS

IN
294.1
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Adyar, Madras

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गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय, हरिद्वार
पुस्तकालय

विषय संख्या
पुस्तक संख्या
आगत पञ्जिका संख्या

पुस्तक पर सर्व प्रकार की निशानियां
र्जित है । कृपया १५ दिन से अधिक
क अपने पास न रखें ।

कांगड़ी

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय
कृपया पुस्तक के ऊपर कोई निशान आदि
न लगायें ।

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पुस्तकालय

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय, हरिद्वार

वर्ग संख्या .... आगत संख्या.....

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KRSHNA

A Study in the Theory of Avaṭāras

स्टाक प्रमाणीकरण १९८४-१९८५

BY

BHAGAVAN DAS

(Second Edition, Revised)

इन्द्र विद्यावाचस्पति
चन्द्रलोक, जवाहर
दिल्ली
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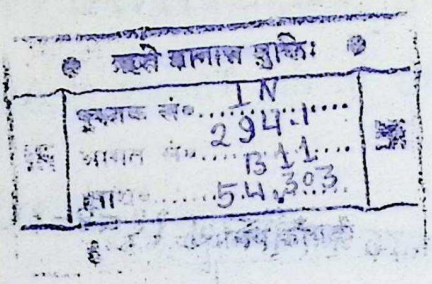

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PREFATORY NOTE

SOME years ago, I was asked by the students of a Hostel connected with the Allahabad University to preside at their celebration of the Janmāshtamī, the Nativity of Kṛṣhṇa, on the 8th day of the dark fortnight of the lunar month of Bhāḍrapaḍa. I read a paper to them on Kṛṣhṇa's life. It was printed by many journals. But there has been a demand for it in separate book-form. This revised and enlarged version is the result.

BHAGAVAN DAS.

Benares,
27th June, 1924.

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KRSHNA

A STUDY IN THE THEORY OF AVAṬĀRAS

THE TIME AND THE MAN

A WESTERN writer summing up the great qualities of Charlemagne, says that " he takes rank among the extraordinary men who from time to time, appear to change the face of the world, and to inaugurate a new era in the destinies of mankind "; for Charlemagne, crowned first Emperor of the new Holy Roman Empire by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day in A.D. 800, completes the transition of Europe from the Dark Ages, which followed upon the break-up of the old Roman Empire, into the Middle Ages proper. The writer was evidently a believer in what has been called the school of *Heroic History*, the school which believes that the Great Man is the " ultimate,

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inexplicable ground for understanding what happened in his day," or even that the history of a nation is only the sum of the adventurous biographies of its Great Men. There has been much disputation whether the man makes the time or the time makes the man. The dispute is not new. It occurs in the *Mahā-bhāraṭa*, as almost every large and important human problem does, together with its express or implied solution. The solution of this particular problem there given seems to support entirely the Heroic School. Bhīshma says to Yuḍhishthira:

कालो वा कारणं राज्ञो राजा वा कालकारणम् ।
इति ते संशयो माभूद् राजा कालस्य कारणम् ॥

"Is the time the cause of the king, or is the king the cause of the time? Let no such doubts trouble thee. The king makes the time."

But while this was undoubtedly the appropriate answer in the immediate context, it should not be understood as wholly without reservations. While the modern Heroic School regards the Great Man as "inexplicable," the Purāṇa School of History does not

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so regard him. And this makes the great difference of significance of the same words, when uttered by the two different thinkers.

The Theory of Avaṭāras

The Purāṇa School has a theory of its own as to these Great Men. They do not appear accidentally. They evolve from smallness to greatness in accordance with laws. They are of various grades and kinds and degrees of power. They appear for special reasons in special circumstances. And this theory of Great Men is, as might be expected, part and parcel of the total Purāṇic theory of the nature of the Universe, and of the birth, the evolution, and the dissolution of world-systems therein. As has been remarked in the West, "sciences are not many; Science is one". All the so-called separate sciences are but the shoots and branches of one main Root-Science, the Science of the Infinite Spirit, *Brahma-vidyā* or *Āṭma-vidyā*. Even so, varying the phrase, "religions may be many, but Religion is one". And the Religion of the Infinite Spirit or Consciousness is the same as the

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Science thereof. It is metaphysic and psychology in the fullest and most comprehensive sense; it includes the principles of superphysics as well as physics; in it science and religion become one. While the *Darshana-sūtras* expound this *Ātma-vidyā* in an abstract form, the Purāṇas and Iṭihāsas illustrate its principles concretely. In so doing they reconcile all conflicts of opinions by assigning to each view its proper time, place, and limits. There can be no more and no less conflict, as well as agreement, between the various sciences and views, than there is between the various features and aspects of Nature, the Nature of the Spirit, with which they deal and whose interdependence and organic unity they are all beginning again to recognise.

In this way we find, in the Purāṇas, both views duly reconciled, by explanation of what the sense is, in which the man makes the time, and what that is, in which the time makes, or, better, brings the man. Time as *Kāla* or *Mahā-Kāla*, the "moving" Spirit, is but another name or aspect of the Oversoul whose Will-and-Imagination is the deep-lying cause of all the drama and panorama of all

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history, of all the world-process, and so brings into the play the so-called Great Man also, on the proper occasion.[1] Time as a particular era, of peace and goodwill, or of sin and struggle and sorrow, is the effect of the working of a good great man or an evil great man—for there are rogue-heroes as well as angel-heroes

[1] The word *Kāla* means ordinarily what is understood by the word time; but its etymology is, *kalayati iti Kālah*, that which *moves* all things. It has to be remembered that it is the Self, attaching itself to and detaching itself from not-selves, which creates, gives rise to the appearance of, Time, Space, and Motion. (See *The Science of Peace.*)

Will-and-Imagination is Kāma-and-Sankalpa. Thus,

धर्ममूलोऽर्थ इत्युक्तः कामोऽर्थफलमुच्यते ।
संकल्पमूलास्ते सर्वे संकल्पो विषयात्मकः ॥

Mahā-bhārata, Shānti, ch. 123.

सनातनो हि संकल्पः काम इत्यभिधीयते ।
संकल्पाभिरुचिः कामः सनातनतमोऽभवत् ॥
जगत्पतिरनिर्देश्यः सर्वगः सर्वभावनः ।
हृच्छयः सर्वभूतानां ज्येष्ठो ख्रादपि प्रभुः ॥

Mahā-bhārata, Anushāsana, ch. 131.

कामः सर्वमयः पुंसां स्वसंकल्पसमुद्भवः ।
कामात् सर्वे प्रवर्त्तंते लीयंते वृद्धिमागताः ॥

Shiva Purāṇa, Dharma Samhiṭā, ch. 8.

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः संगस्तेषूपजायते ।
संगात् संजायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ *Gīṭā.*

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in the play. In fact, the great Jaina writers, whose versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahā-bhāraṭa* are more "rationalistic," have a very illuminative theory that the avaṭāras always come in opposed pairs, as *Nārāyaṇa* and *Praṭi-Nārāyaṇa*, the former representing the Good Force and the latter the Evil, as Räma and Rāvaṇa; and history is fullest and vividest when the two forces are battling most strongly. Briefly, Time as the Oversoul makes the man, time as an era is made by the man.

It may also be mentioned here that the Purāṇas first sketch in very broad outlines the story of what, in modern terms, may be called (1) inorganic evolution; then they describe (2) organic evolution in our little world-system, also in broad outlines; then they set forth in a little more detail the æonian unfoldment of the potencies of (3) the Human Race and of its (4) many sub-races; and finally they describe in brief (5) the process of dissolution of a world-system.

सगश्चं प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वंतराणि च ।
वंशानुचरितं चैव पुराणं पंचलक्षणम् ॥

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"The Purāṇa has five principal features" (as above).

In this way they perform the work of all the various schools of history now current, the date and fact school, the heroic, the sociological or anthropological or democratic, the naturalistic or environmental, the idealistic, etc.[1] In connection with the story of the Human Kingdom mainly, and incidentally with that of the animal and the ḍeva kingdoms, we find mention of the *Avaṭāras*, the Great Men or Souls in the highest degree. They may, in a sense, be regarded as the very special and focused manifestations of the *Sūṭr-āṭmā*, the Oversoul, of the Human Race. Otherwise, indeed, the notion is familiar to the Indian that the One Life manifests in *all* creatures and not only in the remarkably great.

We read in the *Bhagavaḍ-Gīṭā*:

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान् मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ and
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ and again,
यद् यद् विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंशसंभवम् ॥

[1] See C. Delisle Burns's *Political Ideals*, ch. 1.

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"While I pervade all things and all beings, moving and unmoving, yet extraordinarily splendid manifestations embody my *tejas*-attribute, my 'fire,' my *active* Energy, in a special degree."

As there will not be occasion to refer to them again, a word may be given to the non-human (or sub or superhuman) avatāras here. The Fish, Turtle, Boar, Man-Lion and Dwarf Incarnations of Vishṇu may, in one sense, be regarded as Purāṇic allegories of the stages of psycho-physical evolution. In another sense, they may be regarded as typifying the fact of the appearance of abnormal leaders amongst animals also; Kipling's story of *The White Seal* and Thompson Seton's account of *Krag, the Kootenay Ram* illustrate the same fact, in very modern language. A manifestation of *Shakti* (Cosmic Energy) in the shape of clouds of wasps for the destruction of an *Asura* (Titan) named Aruṇa, is mentioned in *Durgā-saptashati*, and reminds one of the Egyptian plagues of flies, locusts, frogs, etc. Some avatāras in the deva kingdom are mentioned in the Purāṇas. But the human are obviously of most interest to us.

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9

THE OVERSOUL

Some of us may perhaps wonder: What is this Oversoul and what can be meant by its special manifestations? The words of the *Gītā*, we may say, sound impressive enough, but they do not come home to us.

Well, let us try to explain. We know that explaining is reducing the unfamiliar into terms of the familiar—nothing more. Let us do this in the present case.

There is vitality in all my body. But if I rest quietly, I do not feel it more keenly in any one part than in any other. Let a mosquito sting me, however, on the left hand. At once there is a concentration of feeling there; and at the same time, there is another concentration of life-force in the other hand which rapidly moves over to brush off the mosquito and rub the smarting spot and restore equanimity there. This is possible because, while the two hands are separate, they are also bound in an organic unity. So, in a condition of ordinary peace and good government, if there is any special manifestation of lawlessness in any place, there is a special

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strengthening and concentration of the forces of lawfulness there, to counteract it. This is possible only because while the individual law-breakers and law-preservers are separate, they have also an underlying communal unity. This unity may not be visible to the physical eye, as in the other case, but it is as much a fact. Everyone of us is constantly using the two words "I" and "We". When he says "I," he is thinking of, or feeling, his individual soul; when he says "We," he is thinking of, or feeling, his Oversoul, the Communal Soul, the *Sūṭr-āṭmā*.

But some one may say, "We" is only a collection of "I's". Is it? No; it is much more. It is the *principle* which collects and holds them together. It is that impalpable, invisible, yet very insistent *something* which makes them think and feel and act alike, for a common purpose, *which makes the collection possible.* If the simple little word "We" has any meaning, then the word "Oversoul" has also a meaning. In hunting diligently for the significance of the one, we will find the secret of the other; as, should we but search diligently enough for the real meaning of that simpler

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word "I," we may find the utterly finite and infinitesimal as well as the Infinite itself. The modern expressions, "public opinion," "diffused intelligence," "collective mind," "mass-mind," "public spirit," "solidarity of man," "national enthusiasm," "general panic," "popular sentiment," etc., all indicate the presence and working of the same principle, the Oversoul or Group-soul.

मनो महान् मतिर्ब्रह्मा पूर्वुद्धिः ख्यातिरीश्वरः ।
प्रज्ञाचितिः स्मृतिः संविद् विपुरं चोच्यते बुधैः ॥
विद्यते स च सर्वस्मिन् सर्वं तस्मिंश्च विद्यते ।
तस्मात्संविदिति प्रोक्तो महान् वै बुद्धिमत्तरैः ॥

Vāyu Purāṇa, I, iv.

Its Manifestations

The law governing the extraordinary manifestations of the Oversoul is, according to the Purāṇas, the same as in the familiar cases mentioned above. The law of analogy holds good here as elsewhere.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

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परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ *Gīṭā.*

"For the advancement of 'civilising conventions and customs,' the institution of 'law and order,' the *re*-establishment of an old law and order, or, it may be, the new establishment of a new law and order, for the protection of the good and the destruction of the evil—for this purpose, whenever the general forces of inertia, ignorance, sloth, vice and crime begin to prevail overmuch over the forces of virtue, love and goodness —the Self, the Universal I, appears as and in and through the Great Man, cycle after cycle to re-establish the disturbed balance, in various ways." And

इत्थं यदा यदा बाधा दानवोत्था भविष्यति ।
तदा तदावतीर्याहं करिष्याम्यरिसंक्षयम् ॥

Durgā-sapṭa-shaṭī.

"Whenever the *dānavas*, evil men, proceed to excess, (the) I will take birth and destroy them."

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13

Religion and Civilisation

The birth and growth of every new civilisation, every new culture, have been preceded by a religion, re-*legere*, a re-binding together, anew, of human hearts by a fresh faith, *i.e.*, *refreshened faith*—because the Supreme and yet the nearest Object of faith, our own Inmost *Self*, the God *in* us all, and the other chief penultimate objects of faith, *viz.*, Life Immortal, the distinction between Love and Hate, Right and Wrong, Reward and Punishment, "As we sow, so must we reap," are the most ancient yet ever new, the most commonplace yet ever the most noble and most elevating, the most hackneyed yet ever the most vitally important, without the holy authority of which the most impressive seeming and pompously worded laws are mere suicidal cunning. This refreshened faith, harking back to these origins and foundations of all life, has therefore always come as *faith with reason* (or, indeed with direct perception or intuition, the basis of reason), which is science (in contradistinction from faith without reason, which is superstition). Witness the Buḍḍhist, the Christian,

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and the Islāmic religions and corresponding cultures or civilisations and kingdoms. The rise of sects and even sub-sects within the fold of a major religion, has also given rise to important variations in the culture; Protestantism, Quakerism, Mormonism, Chaiṭanyism, Sikhism, Jainism, Hina-yanism, Maha-yanism, Wahabism are instances.

So the degeneration, decay and death of every old civilisation have been preceded by the corruption, decay and death of the religion (and therefore morals) which gave it being, and nursed and supported it in its growth and its prime—the death of the faith, namely, of human beings in the Eternal Principles, and in each other, primarily, and secondarily, an excessive clinging to the outer forms, rites and ceremonies and sacraments and conventions, which merely symbolised these Principles for that community.

Therefore the scriptures say, in various ways, that when virtue decays, and vice flourishes, *i.e.*, when the uniting inner heart-faith and essential religion weaken, and the divisive outer formalisms, narrow bigotries and vicious practices and sectarianisms miscalled religion

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strengthen, then the God in man, the Oversoul of Humanity, for its own self-preservation against the Demons of Mutual Hate and Internecine War, evolves new forces which simply *revive* that deep heart-faith, always *essentially* the same, though embodying itself in varying *forms*, from time to time.

ḌAIṬYAS, ḌĀNAVAS, ETC.

It should be borne in mind that the Ḍevas or Suras, and the Ḍaiṭyas, Ḍāñavas, Asuras, Rākshasas, etc., are all "cousins" or even "step-brothers," in the poetic and allegorical language of the Purāṇas; that, historically, they very probably mean different races and sub-races of the human race; superphysically or psychically, they mean the same groups of *jīvas* (souls) born in different races, at different times, now in a preponderantly selfish mood and now in an unselfish; and that even "mystically," as Rāma and Kṛṣhṇa are avaṭāras of Vishṇu, so Rāvaṇa and Kumbha-karṇa, Kamsa and Shishupāla, etc., are avaṭāras of Vishṇu's *pārshaḍas* or angel-attendants, are "fallen angels"—in

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the sense of fallen into evil ways as also into fleshly incarnations.

The *Bhāgavaṭa* expressly says that both the good and the evil forms are forms of the One Life.

स्वशांतरूपेष्वितरैः स्वरूपैरभ्यर्द्यमानेष्वनुकंपितात्मा ।
परावरेशो महदंशयुक्तो ह्यजोऽपि जातो भगवान्यथाग्निः ॥
III, ii, 15.

"Beholding His peaceful forms being oppressed by His own other restless embodiments; the compassioning Lord manifested Himself in a special body endowed with an extraordinary measure of the substance and quality of *Mahaṭ* (the Universal Mind), to restore the due balance and proportion between the two, even as the ever-present but latent agni-fire flames up and appears to be born out of combustibles (under friction or violent impact)."

Another and less known interpretation of the verse, "When the forces of evil begin to prevail, etc.," may be mentioned here, as of importance for the philosophical understanding of world-events. While avaṭāras adjust the good and bad karma of others, they,

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incidentally, *expiate their own evil karma* at the same time, by their own voluntary sufferings in the course of those adjustments. The *shāpa-s*, "curses," "dooms," laid upon the high *ḍevas*, "gods," mostly by the *ṛṣhis*, "saints and sages," in accordance with which these "gods" take birth on earth as greater or lesser avaṭāras, require to be pondered upon, in this reference. They are impartially mentioned by the same Purāṇas which describe the glories of these avaṭāras. The nature of the errors for which these dooms are pronounced; the nature of these pronouncements, whether they have a compelling force or are merely declarations of consequences; the results of them to the ṛṣhis themselves; the nature of the gods, whether they are predominantly personal or are predominantly impersonal nature-forces, etc.—all these are connected and interesting questions for investigation, the anwers to which may be found in the same Purāṇas also.

It may also be called to mind here that if the avaṭāras of good expiate their previous sins in this way, the avaṭāras of evil expiate

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or exhaust their previous virtues and stores of merit by their self-willed ways. The "ten-headed" Rāvaṇa, symbol of his excessively intellectual nation, won his "golden" city of Lanka after conquering the "gods," by the sacrifice of his own "heads," over and over again, in the course of the *ṭapas*-striving of "thousands of years," even as the present excessively intellectual nations of the West have been conquering the gods of earth, water, fire, air, and electricity, and been winning the stores of Mammon and Bacchus, by the sacrifice and death, in the course of centuries, of their many "heads," their best and most courageous, enterprising and adventurous explorers, scientific experimenters, aviators, submarinists, electricians, engineers, soldiers, merchants and sailors.

Main Kinds of Great Men

Obviously, there are many kinds and grades of *ḍharma*, of "law and order". Therefore there are as many kinds and grades of promoters and protectors thereof. The main kinds are three. The functions of life

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and mind are three: knowing, desiring, acting. Therefore the essential business of all true law and order is to promote right knowledge, right desire, and right action. When this is done, everything is done. Law and order, Ḍharma, does not mean the theocrat's conception of it; it does not mean what any particular pope or priest thinks, for his own and his class's and caste's aggrandisement, should be the law and order; or what any autocrat, aristocrat, bureaucrat thinks it ought to be; or any plutocrat; or any particular democrat, for the matter of that. The ancient conception of Ḍharma is that it is that Code of Life which will establish a due balance and proportion between all these four fundamental and true "estates of the realm," *viz.*, the clergy or the learned, the nobles or the office-bearers, the merchants or the commons, and the workmen, and will enable all human beings to attain happiness here as well as hereafter, by giving to each his due and not more than his due, dividing rights and duties, selfishness and unselfishness, work and play, equitably, and creating a balance of power between the main *classes* which make up every civilised

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community and are to the social organism even as the head, the hands, the trunk and the legs are to the individual living human body—in the grand and utterly true old Vedic simile, now so misinterpreted and perverted from its true significance, by a combination of selfishness and ignorance, into the support of a system of blindly hereditary caste which only makes for arrogance and hypocrisy on the one hand and gullibility and ever-growing ignorance and then revolt on the other, and utter national weakness and internal dissensions on all sides.

It is for the establishment of Ḍharma in the largest and truest sense, whenever the balance of human society is jeopardised excessively by selfish, ruthless, evil and cruel human beings, that the great *avaṭāras* appear, the Great Men of history in the fullest sense. In them the Oversoul puts forth its powers of good, to give right knowledge to humanity, inspire right desire and devotion to high ideals, and set example of noble action. Minor manifestations are called *āvesha-s*, *amsha-s*, *kalā-vaṭara-s*, *ṛṣhis*, *munis*, prophets, *nabī-s*, messiahs, sons of God, *rasūl-s*,

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messengers of God, etc.; the greatest ones are called *avaṭāras* proper, in Samskṛṭ terminology. The Purāṇas say that the central heart-and-brain of the solar system is the Sun, our *praṭyaksha-ḍevaṭā,* "visible deity," the most radiant manifestation of the Spiritual Sun of the Gāyaṭrī-*manṭra*; whose reverent invocation, for the *collective* mental illumination and inspiration, and therefore the physical and moral health, of the *community* (and not only of the *individual* worshipper) is the one indispensable and all-sufficient daily worship ordained for the regenerate, twice-born, Āryan person; the God in whose light and life we all literally live and move and have our being; and from whose effulgent *prāṇa*-energy we obviously derive all our vitality and all our intelligence. In this Central Seed-and-Heart-and-Brain reside all the greatest wonders and forces;[1] It is the Oversoul of the

[1] सर्वप्रवहिकानामाश्रयः। *Nirukṭa.*

सर्वेषामवताराणां निधानं बीजमव्ययम्।
यस्यांशांशेन सृज्यंते देवतिर्यङ्नरादयः॥

"The inexhaustible seed-store of all avaṭāras, out of a part of a part of Whom are made all gods and men and animals." सर्वदेवमयो हि सः, "He is made

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whole solar system, and all the great avaṭāras come from It in a peculiar sense. One scientific theory of the origin of life upon earth is that it came here from other heavenly bodies. The Purāṇas indicate that it came and continues to come, as need arises, from the Sun in a special degree, and that all the planets of the system exchange life-germs and souls from time to time even as the countries and the continents of this earth exchange inhabitants. This process was not confined to the distant past, but is going on now, for the Sun is not an absentee God, and his planets are not absentee angels, obviously.

And so the great avaṭāras come from the Sun,[1] to this as well as to other planets. But minor manifestations arise otherwise. To take a familiar illustration: if a son or ward finds himself in difficulty in a distant land and informs the parent or guardian by wireless

up of all the gods, *i.e.*, the more individualised high Jivas as well as the less individualised nature-forces,"—*Bhāgavaṭa.* सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च, "The Sun is the soul of the moving and the unmoving," —*Upanishaṭ.*

[1] The *Bhavishya-Purāṇa* has some explicit statements on the point and narrates specific instances.

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telegraphy, and the parent or guardian finds it necessary to travel down himself to save the situation, it may be technically said to be a case of an avaṭāra proper. If he sends down a devoted friend or servant, it would be a *kalā-vaṭāra* or *amshā-vaṭāra*. If he simply sends down instruction to a friend or agent on the spot, by means of telepathy, "inspires" him to do what is needed, it would be a case of *āvesha*. And so on.

Also, the avaṭāras and the anti-avaṭāras usually come with their particular favourite groups, companies, *vyūhas*, of associates and friends. The old books mention the previous births and deeds of many of their main characters, and their changes of parts in the world-drama which they enliven. Thus Rāma, the elder brother, devotedly served by Lakshmaṇa, the younger, became Kṛṣhṇa, the younger brother, while the other, as Bala-rāma, the elder, took his turn of ease.

Even in the case of Parashu-rāma, though the current tradition briefly credits him with having "destroyed the Kshaṭṭriyas, root and branch, twenty-one times," various Purāṇas which describe his deeds more fully, say that

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his father Jamaḍagni and he gathered great armies with which, at first the father, and after his death in battle at the hands of Kārṭavīrya, the son, fought and broke the tyrannical militarism of his day in twenty-one great battles (as the legendary King Arthur of England, much later, defeated the enemies of his country in "twelve great battles"). The Kshaṭṭriyas of the Haihaya and the Ṭālajangha ("long-legged") clans had obtained mastery over the land and lost all sense of right-and-duty, and begun to harass the people and to take away "the cow of Jamaḍagni," *i.e.*, their land and their means of living. (*Gauh*, now meaning only the cow, etymologically means whatever *goes*, *gachchhati iṭi gauh*, and in the earlier literature meant the ever-wandering orbs of heaven including the earth, the rushing rays of the sun, the five senses which are always going out to their objects, and so forth.) Well, Parashu-rāma, a great avaṭāra, seems to have done what is not usual in ancient Indian history; he gathered armies composed of *all the other three castes* and gave battle to the Kshaṭṭriyas. Usually, the work of fighting, and of providing to the world the

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dramatic scenes which broke the monotony of life's dull routine, was left to be done by the Kshaṭṭriyas, as a matter of profession, while the rest of the people carried on the work of *their* respective professions. But in the time of Parashu-râma, necessity had to override the custom and everybody had to lend a hand. At first the allied armies were defeated, day after day. Then, one night, a deputation went over to the Kshaṭṭriya camp and asked them: "We are many, you are few by comparison. How is it you manage to defeat us?" And the Kshaṭṭriyas, with the reckless dare-devil chivalry which still ran through their tyrannousness, replied: "You are a mob, each fighting for himself; we are an organised army, with a generalissimo, and the whole fights as one body under one head." Then the allies appointed Parashu-râma their generalissimo, (as also happened in the recent Great War) and steadily defeated the Kshaṭṭriyas. (The story is given in the *Uḍyoga-Parva* of the *Mahābhāraṭa*, but without the name of Parashu-râma.) Afterwards, when a genuine righteous-minded Kshaṭṭriya came, *viz.*, Râma, the aged Parashu-râma "handed over his bow,"

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i.e., his duty and his authority, to him, and the avaṭāric afflatus passed from the elder to the younger Superman.

Of Thought, Emotion and Action

Because there are three main functions of life and mind, therefore there are three main departments of human communal life and administration, three main classes of work requiring to be fostered and promoted, three main sorts of disorder requiring to be cured, and three main kinds of great men that appear to cure them.

(*a*) When false teachers and false teachings which would elevate the things of the flesh above the things of the spirit begin to prevail; when erroneous notions of a gross kind, and false outlooks upon life, and ideals of mammonism and sensuousness, which would drag men away entirely from their birthright of the Eternal Spirit, threaten to undermine the foundations of civilisation and social organisation, by leading towards an excess of greed and grab and struggle and war and general lawlessness and anarchy; then the *teachers* appear to reillumine the Science of

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the Spirit and infuse the beauty of the ideal into the coarseness of the real. All the great seers, poets, philosophers and scientists of all lands and ages are high or low manifestations of these. Vyāsa, Shankara, and the *shāstra-pravarṭaka* Ṛṣhis, the fathers of learning, the discoverers and builders and "promulgators of new sciences" or revivers of old ones, are examples in Indian history. King Pṛthu, *āḍi-rāja*, the "first of kings", *rāja-rāja*, the "king of kings," an avaṭāra of Viṣhṇu, is a special combination of teacher and leader. Many of the fundamental arts of civilisation, as we know it to-day, were discovered and taught by him or through appropriate teachers or in his glorious reign—the arts of agriculture with artificial irrigation, rearing of milch-cattle, music, house-building, town-laying, and many other arts of "milking the Earth-Cow" of her countlessly varied riches, as also various ill things, like the preparation of spirituous liquors, for every shine has its shadow. (*Bhāgavaṭa*, IV, xviii.)

सर्वे स्वमुख्यवत्सेन स्वे स्वे पात्रे पृथक् पयः ।
सर्वकामदुघां पृथ्वीं दुदुहुः पृथुभाविताम् ॥

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चूर्णयन् स्वधनुष्कोट्या गिरिकूटानि राजराट् ।
भूमंडलमिदं वैन्यः प्रायश्चक्रे समं विभुः ॥
अथास्मिन् भगवान् वैन्यः प्रजानां वृत्तिदः पिता ।
निवासान् कल्पयांचक्रे तत्र तत्र यथार्हतः ॥
प्राक् पृथोरिह नैवासीत् पुरग्रामादिकल्पना ।
यथासुखं वसंतिस्म तत्र तत्राकुतोभयाः ॥

(*b*) When wrong emotions, the lower passions, false worships of over-sensuous gods, and the causes that increase lust, hate, greed, pride and the others of the brood of "the six inner enemies" spoken of in the Samskṛṭ *shāsṭras*, or "the seven deadly sins" of Christian theology, begin to grow and multiply, then the devotion-inspiring manifestations occur, who by their own love-compelling purity, nobility, humility and genuine self-effacement draw and then diligently direct the hearts of human beings not towards themselves, not towards the forms of flesh and blood that they inhabit, but towards the Universal Fount of all Life. Mahāvira Jina, Buḍḍha, Christ, Rāmānuja, Kabir, Sūr, Ṭulasi, Chaiṭanya, Nānak and others, in various degrees, may be regarded as types of this class

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of manifestations; though Buḍḍha and Jina, like Laotze and Confucius were great philosophical and intellectual teachers also.

(*c*) When wrong knowledge and wrong desire have not been cured in time, but have gained the upper hand—in accord with the deeper laws that underlie the sequence of vicious as well as virtuous experiences that must be passed through by the human race and its sub-races—when the forces of evil selfishness and ruthless ambition, in the shape of cruelly selfish men, have obtained and held sway for their appointed term, gained by previous self-sacrifice and *ṭapasyā*, then the history-making avaṭāras proper appear, the adjusters of national Karma, the righters of widespread wrongs.

Examples

Parashu-rāma, Rāma and Kṛṣhna are the outstanding examples of the last, in ancient Indian history. The prophet Muhammad, founder of a religion as well as warrior, is a good example in the history of other lands; Guru Govinḍa Simha is another example, of

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great man of action as well as teacher and poet, in modern Indian history.

The deeds of the ancient Indian avaṭāras, mentioned above, are thrown into contrasting relief by the equally vast misdeeds of Kārṭavirya and the Haihayas, of Rāvaṇa and the Rākshasas, of Shishupāla and Ḍuryoḍhana and the Kauravas. All these names are, from the modern standpoint, prehistoric. Whether and which of the historic conquerors and empire-founders and state-builders, *e.g.*, Menes, Minos, Chandragupṭa, Ashoka, Vikrama, Rameses, Solomon, Semiramis, Shi-Hwang-Ti, Hideyoshi, Iyeyasu, Alexander, Cæsar, Attila, Changez, Tamer-lane, Akbar, Shivāji, Napoleon, Chaka of the Zulus, etc., should be regarded as manifestations on the right side or the wrong side—history cannot quite clearly make up its mind. Even the purest lives have touches of impurity; even the worst have gleams of goodness; much more so these very mixed characters; because all are complexes of inseparable Spirit and Matter; but Rānā Pratap, Cromwell, George Washington, Bolivar, Lincoln are generally acknowledged to be good as well as great names which

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stand for great and high ideals consistently fought for and upheld. Only the predominant quality gives the name. And this, by the way, is a most important metaphysical axiom, which, taken together with its brother axiom, that every question has two sides and the true answer always lies in the mean between the two extremes, solves many an otherwise insoluble puzzle. Thus the threefold classification of great men is only by predominance; none has been exclusively and wholly either a teacher, or a devotion-inspirer, or a history-maker. Every new religion, every rebinding together of human hearts, by Manu, Buḍḍha, Christ, Muhammad, or Shankara, Rāmānuja, Chaiṭanya, Guru Govinda Simha, whether by philosophical teaching or by devotion-inspiring, has been followed, as said before, by a new civilisation, a new culture, and new states, larger or smaller in space and time; though, of course, the religions, and the corresponding cultures, have, in all cases, managed, in the course of time, to drift away very far from the ideals of the founders and reformers, in consequence of the drag of the lower half of human nature upon the higher, and the

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same old degenerative superstitions and vices have appeared in every one, under new forms.

But while most of these great men have discharged one function predominantly, Kṛṣhṇa combined in himself all the three functions in an extraordinary degree. His activities and perfections were so manysided that he is claimed by a very large section of the Hinḍū people to have been a *pūrṇa-avaṭāra*, "a *complete* manifestation," of the *whole* of the Supreme or rather Universal Life, as no other was, not even Rāma himself. कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम्।

Yet this is but the natural and excusable exaggeration of loving and devoted hearts which, deceived into subtle pride by the very sweetness of this form of Māyā, cannot rest content till they have magnified and glorified their own particular favourite deity beyond all others, thereby implicitly belittling all the others. That the *whole* of the Infinite Universal Spirit cannot be exhaustively focused into any one finite part, however great, is mathematically obvious. And in the particular case, the *Bhāgavaṭa* itself says that Bala-rāma and Kṛṣhṇa were "two threads of hair," one

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white and one dark, two strands from the locks, two rays from the coronal aureole, of the head of *Āḍitya-Nārāyaṇa*, the Sun, the very visibly obvious Head of our solar system. सितकृष्णकेशौ is the expression used.

Rāma and Kṛṣhṇa divide the heart of the Hinḍū people between them. Even Vyāsa, the great contemporary and historian of Kṛṣhṇa and his times, who has composed that marvellous Epic of Devotion, the *Bhāgavaṭa*, in praise and adoration of Kṛṣhṇa pre-eminently —even Vyāsa reserves a place, in his heart, of very tender reverence for Rāma the Perfect, the Noble, the *Maryāḍā-Purusha*, the "Standard Man" *par excellence*. In every one of the many Purāṇas which tradition ascribes to Vyāsa, the story of Rāma is included as an episode, at greater or lesser length ; and in the *Bhāgavaṭa* itself he sings hymns to Rāma whose feeling is not surpassed by those of his *ṣtoṭras* to Kṛṣhṇa.

त्यक्त्वा सुदुस्त्यजसुरेप्सितराज्यलक्ष्मीं
धर्मिष्ठ आर्यवचनाद् यदगादरण्यं ।
भृत्यार्तिहं प्रणतपाल भवाब्धिपोतं
वंदे महापुरुष ते चरणारविंदम् ॥

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"I salute thy feet, O greatest of men !, most perfect in duty !, most tender, heroic and ever-resistless defender of thy devotees and dependants from all ills ! In all reverent humility I salute thy feet that lightly turned away, at the wish of the father, from the glories of a kingship which the gods themselves might envy, towards the depths of the forests. I salute the feet that guide the tired and the weary safely across the wilderness of life as the ships carry merchants across the ocean of waters."

The All-Sidedness of Kṛṣhṇa

But the devotion that Kṛṣhṇa inspires is different. As western anthropologists have divided Man's lifetime into the Stone age, the Bronze age, the Iron age, etc., in terms of the external implements used by him, Purāṇic historians have divided it into the Saṭya, the Ṭreṭā, the Ḍwāpara and the Kali eras,[1] in

[1] *Saṭya* means "truth"; the age is also known as *Kṛṭa*, "action," *i.e.*, the age in which the people did unquestioningly what their benevolent elders told them. *Ṭreṭā* means "three"; also, the age in which people were specially "protected," *ṭrāyanṭé*,

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terms of man's psychological and ethical characteristics. They add the clear explanation that while the Yugas succeed one another in and for any given country and people, they are coexistent if different countries are taken into account simultaneously. This, in the modern phrase of the evolutionary sociologist, means that all the stages of man's social development are to be found to-day in different parts of the earth. Rāma came to wind up the Ṭreṭā age, wherein love and co-operation and unselfishness are almost as three parts, and struggle and selfishness as one, and gave a last illustration of the patriarchal administration of the affairs of men at its best. The preceding or Saṭya age might be regarded as one of primitive joint-family-like communism, wherein unselfish love and trust and mutual help are almost unopposed, and sin and selfishness are next to nil. Kṛṣhṇa came at the junction between Ḍwāpara and Kali, when the latter, the age of predominant individualism and competition and "struggle" was beginning and the former, that of almost

by their elders. *Ḍvā-ṗara* means "two-sided," hence doubt also. *Kali* means "discord," "struggle".

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equal "duality," equal sin and virtue, equal competition and co-operation, was coming to an end. The Mahā-bhāraṭa war, which Kṛṣhṇa conducted, is typical of this age. The whole atmosphere of Kṛṣhṇa is far more stormy, passionate, complex, than that of Rāma. He is the typical perfect individual appropriate to this age of intense, concentrated, all-round activity—great in knowledge, great in emotion, great in action, all together. The available scriptures and the literatures of mankind do not seem to record any life fuller and more intense than his.

Kṛṣhṇa as Man of Action and History-Maker and Righter of Wrongs

The *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa* says that he "lived for one hundred and twenty-five years on earth." (XI, vi, 25.)[1]

यदुवंशेऽवतीर्णस्य भवतः पुरुषोत्तम ।
शरच्छतं व्यतीयाय पंचविशाधिकं प्रभो ॥

[1] But the *Mahā-bhāraṭa*, Ādi-parva, ch. 134, (Kumbakonam Edn.), says that Yuḍhishṭhira lived for one hundred and eight years, that Bhīma was a year younger, Arjuna two years, and the twins Nakula and Sahāḍeva three years; and that Kṛṣhṇa

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In every week of this period, if not on every day of it, he fought and battled and warred against and slew evil-doers. As a few-weeks-old baby he bit to death the ogress, Pūṭanā, sent by his maternal uncle Kamsa to murder him with poison-painted breasts. On the very last day of his stay on earth, he slew with his own hands his kinsmen who, before his eyes, slew his favourite pupil Sāṭyaki and his favourite son Pradyumna in that awful drink-maddened mutual slaughter of the Yāḍavas on the seacoast of Prabhāsa, at the close of the day. When he came, the people of the earth were groaning under the intolerable burdens of militarism and the abuse of power by those whose duty it was to protect and not oppress the weak. The Purāṇas and the *Gīṭā* poetically describe the situation thus:

एवं वीर्यमदोत्सिक्तैर्भूरियं तैर् महासुरैः ।
पीड़िता भृशसंतप्ता जगाम प्रपितामहम् ॥

was three months older than Arjuna, and Bala-rāma three months older than (his step-brother) Kṛshṇa. And it was on hearing of Kṛshṇa's departure from the earth, that the five brothers put their grandson Parīkshiṭ on the throne, and went away and cast off their bodies in the "desert beyond the Himālayas, to the north, and in sight of the Meru Mountain." (*Ibid.*, Mahā-prasṭhānika-parva, ch. 2.)

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त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

"Oppressed beyond endurance by those Titans born as rulers of men, mad with the lust of power, the Earth went and cried her agony before the Lord of the Universe; for the rule of the Titan-souls, that had been born into the human forms of the kings of the time, was leading the populations of the earth towards the hell of which lust, hate and greed form the yawning triple gateway."

The Kshaṭṭriya rulers were as ruthless as the Asuras and Rākshasas—by which terms men of the Atlantean and Mongolian races seem to be meant—who had established themselves in strongholds here and there in the country and were harassing the people. Many he slew with his own hands, others he got slain by Bhīma and Arjuna. As he says in the *Mahā-bhāraṭa*:

रावणेन समप्राणा मया भीमेन घातिताः ।

"I have had these, who were of equal vitality with Rāvaṇa himself, slain by Bhīma."

Then he gathered together, by consummate statesmanship, all the inextricably intermingled

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forces of evil and of good of his day, at one time and place, on the plains of Kurukshetra, and hurled them against each other with such skill that though at the beginning of the battle the evil forces outweighed the good ones by eleven *akshauhiṇīs* to seven, *i.e.*, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions to $1\frac{1}{2}$, at the end of it, the proportion was three survivors on the side of might to seven on the side of right.[1] After the figures of the greater war, which closed with the armistice of November, 1918, and the peace-treaties of 1919, wherein eight millions and more have been slaughtered outright and at least as many mutilated and maimed for life, these figures of that previous great war will not be doubted as fanciful. By that war, the Ancient Law, Sanāṭana Ḍharma, became able to hold up its head for another 2,500 years, till the Buḍḍha came to reform it after it had become again diseased with age, and gave it another lease of life for a thousand years in India, when (the second?) Shankara and Rāmānuja and others took up the work of

[1] An *akshauhiṇī* is a force consisting of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horsemen, 109,350 foot-soldiers; and Ḍuryoḍhana had eleven such and Yuḍhishthira seven.

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re-form and re-vival. Finally, knowing that the Kurukshetra had not completed all his work, Kṛṣhṇa finished it at Prabhāsa-kshetra, on the shores of the sea of Ḍwārakā, when his immediate kith and kin slaughtered each other to the number of half a million, as said in the *Mahā-bhārata*, drunk with alcohol and even more drunk with the arrogance of militarism. In this way he broke the last great and dangerous military power of his day and gave to the peaceful agriculturist and tradesman a chance. His voyages for the breaking of militarists across the seas, in other continents and islands, are recorded in other Purāṇas.[1]

Such was his principal work as man of action and maker of history. His many youthful deeds of daring, his battles with and destruction of dangerous beasts and birds and reptiles, vicious horses, mad bulls, ferocious vultures, pythons and snakes, monsters of the dragon or kraken (saurian) type, (a few of which seem to have been still living[2] in caves

[1] *Hari-vamsha, Garga-Samhiṭā, Brahma-vaivarta.*

[2] Some four-tusked mammoths were brought by the King Bhagadatta of Prāgyotisha (Assam) to the Great War. चतुर्दन्ता इभास्तस्य ।

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five thousand years ago, as remnants from the earlier ages), and also robbers, in the hills and the caves, the forests and the streams, neighbouring his adoptive father Nanḍa's ranch, his protection of his fellow-cowkeeper-boys and his cows from a particularly violent thunder-storm which lasted a whole week, with the help of a great cave he had discovered in the Govarḍhana hills—all these have formed the theme of much devotional and idealised poetry that serves "to point a moral and adorn a tale". We must content ourselves here with only a passing mention of it. And yet, for purposes of illustration, something more may be said. The serpent Kāliya has been frequenting the banks and "poisoning" the waters of the Yamunā. Kṛṣhṇa, a mere boy at the time, leaps into the river one day, when Kāliya is swimming, to fight the reptile out. The great snake rushes at him with uplifted head. Kṛṣhṇa drags the head down under water, the snake is almost drowned, and wriggles out, and runs away for good. But this simple story is not enough. Some Purāṇas make out that Kāliya had five heads on which Kṛṣhṇa danced triumphantly; they

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mean that the soul may and ought to reign over the five senses. The *Bhāgavaṭa* goes further and describes in beautiful poetic language, how "that Eternal Boy, first Master of all Arts, danced on the hundred heads and one of that great snake, stamping with all-subduing might now on this and now on that grim head, as it rose hissing, rebellious and menacing—till they were all battered, humbled, and reduced to due submission, and prayed to be allowed to go in peace."

यद्यच्छिरो न नमतेऽङ्ग शतैकशीर्ष्ण-
स्तत्तन्ममर्द खरदंडधरोंघ्रिपातैः ।
तन्मूर्धरत्ननिकरस्पर्शातिताम्र-
पादाम्बुजोऽखिलकलादिगुरुर्ननर्त्त ॥

It is probably referring to the hundred and one principal *nādis* or nerves of the human nervous system mentioned in the *Upanishaṭs*, every one of which comes under the definite and perfect control of the practised and perfected *yogī*, advanced type of future humanity. And it probably does so for weaving into the story, mystical, philosophical, and scientific hints and suggestions, for the purposes of

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educative stimulation of curiosity and enquiry. Some other scholars are inclined to interpret the Kāliya episode as an allegory of the putting down of serpent-worship which also, they say, was over-prevalent then.

Kṛṣhṇa as Man of Emotion and Devotion-Inspirer

As man of desire, of feeling, of arts, his life was equally full.

The *shāstras* say that the *summum bonum* of human life is dual; first *Abhyuḍaya*, then *Nis-shreyas*; first the joys of the embodied life (inseparable from some degree of "sin"), and then the bliss of "salvation," the realisation of the oneness of the individual with the Universal Spirit, the satisfaction of the hunger and thirst of the soul for God, of the longing of the river for the sea, of the part for the whole, of the finite for the Infinite—satisfaction by the assurance that I am (that every I is) the eternal, infinite, universal I. The first is subdivided into Ḍharma, Arṭha, Kāma; that is to say, *kāma* or the joys of sense-life must be refined by *arṭha* or the riches of art,

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which riches must be gathered and spent and administered in accordance with, and can be duly guarded only by, *ḍharma* or law and order.

The same *shāsṭras* mention the conditions of the fulfilment of each end thus :

अर्थस्य मूलं निकृतिः क्षमा च कामस्य रूपं च वयो वपुश्च ।
धर्मस्य यागादि दया दमश्च मोक्षस्य सर्वोपरमः क्रियाभ्यः ॥

" The first requisites for the due fulfilment of the end of *kāma* or ' pleasure ' are strength, beauty and youth ; of *arṭha* or ' wealth,' they are non-arrogant patience and artful ways ; of *ḍharma* or ' duty ' or order in liberty, they are sacrifice, self-control, compassion for the weak ; of *moksha* or ' salvation,' the one condition is retirement from the activities of the world."

Kṛshṇa's extraordinary beauty of face and figure and unique colour and complexion have been the theme of the singers of a hundred and fifty generations after him. That simple village-maidens or even conscious city-ladies should lose their hearts to him, that he should inspire compeers of his own sex with enthusiastic admiration and devoted affection—are

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not difficult to understand. But when Bhīshma, belonging to the generation of Kṛṣhṇa's grandfather, Bhīshma, much over a hundred years of age at that time, stretched on his death-bed of arrows, waiting for the right moment to cast off his body by *yoga*—when he, seeing Kṛṣhṇa standing before him, can think of nothing else for his first thought than Kṛṣhṇa's physical beauty, then we may well believe that it must have been something overpowering. In his dying hymn to Kṛṣhṇa, as avaṭāra of Nārāyaṇa, Bhīshma sings first of his physical beauty: "The heart's desire of the three worlds, waking, dreaming and sleeping (for is not the Self the Best Beloved of every self perforce?), lovingly gazed on with tireless eyes by all beholders, the peculiar complexion, the splendid dress, the curling locks playing about the oval lotus-face, the loving glance, the thrilling voice, and the graces of smile and laugh and speech and gesture and every movement that drove the youths and maidens mad almost."

त्रिभुवनकमनं तमालवर्णं रविकरगौरवरांबरं दधाने ।
वपुरलककुलावृताननाब्जं विजयसखे रतिरस्तु मेऽनवद्या ॥

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ललितगतिविलासवल्गुहासप्रणयनिरीक्षणकल्पितोरुमानाः ।
कृतमनुकृतवत्य उन्मदांधाः प्रकृतिमगन् किल यस्य गोपवध्वः ॥

It has been said that the body is the soul made visible. In the case of Kṛṣhṇa, this truth is verified amply by his marvellous æsthetic taste and mastery of the "sixty-four" fine and other arts. He began as a flute-player, fascinating the village maids and youths and the cattle and the animals of the jungle. He ended with giving lessons to Nāraḍa in the art of playing the *vīṇā*. It may be noted, in passing, that Kṛṣhṇa's own "schooling" with the Āchārya Sāndīpani, originally belonging to Benares, but settled at Ujjain, is an object-lesson in the science of education. He went there with his brother Bala-rāma, many hundreds of miles distant from his paternal home in Maṭhurā, after he had come away from Vrindāvana, and had slain his parents' and his own and the peoples' enemy, King Kamsa; and he lived and studied with his teacher just like the other students in respect of the *hardy life*, gathering fuel from the woods for his teacher's household, and getting "lost" with his companions and wandering about in

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the jungle for whole nights, in thunderstorms, and inspiring those companions, as usual, with lifelong love, unlike them only in his powers of body and mind, astonishing his teacher with the quality of his memory, wonderful like all things else of his, retaining the most difficult learning after but one hearing. To build up hardy body and determined mind, to acquire the habit and the power of doing all one's work oneself without dependence on dependants, to lay the foundations of lifelong friendships, to learn about and duly exercise both *rights and duties*, to gain admission into all the departments of science and art, to understand what the ends of life are and how to achieve them —that this is the purpose of Education is illustrated by Kṛṣhṇa's "schooling".

अथो गुरुकुले वासमिच्छन्तावुपजग्मतुः ।
काश्यं सान्दीपनिं नाम ह्यवन्तिपुरवासिनम् ॥
तयोर्द्विजवरस्तुष्टः शुद्धभावानुवृत्तिभिः ।
प्रोवाच वेदानखिलान् सांगोपनिषदो गुरुः ॥
सरहस्यं धनुर्वेदं धर्मान्न्यायपथांस्तथा ।
तथा चान्वीक्षिकीं विद्यां राजनीतिं च षड्विधाम् ॥

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सर्वं नरवरश्रेष्ठौ सर्वविद्याप्रवर्त्तकौ ।
सकृन्निगदमात्रेण तौ संजगृहतुर्नृप ॥
अहोरात्रैश्चतुःषष्ट्या संयत्तौ तावतीः कलाः ॥

Bhāgavaṭa, X, xlv.

"The Āchārya Sāndīpani, pleased with their pure-minded dutifulness, expounded to the two glorious brothers, all the Veḍas, together with their subsidiary sciences, and their quintessential secret, the philosophy of the Upanishaṭs, also the sciences and the arts of war, of law, of logical reasoning, of politics and civics with their six departments. And the two wondrous mock-pupils, in reality the Ancient Creators of all Sciences and Arts, seized hold of all these at one hearing, and mastered the sixty-four fine arts in as many days."

Kṛṣhṇa reclaimed land from the ocean by a feat of engineering not detailed in the available books, unfortunately, but described poetically as consisting in a simple command to the ocean to recede; built his great city of Ḍwārakā near by, on the site of an ancient vanished capital-town; filled the city with towered and spired buildings, and constructed a hall of audience

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whose walls and pillars were inlaid with scores of different kinds of gems and jewels duly listed in the *Hari-vamsha*. This hall was named Suḍharmā and outrivalled even Yuḍhisthira's marvellous palace at Inḍra-prasṭha built by the Asura (probably Atlantean-Mongolian) architect, Maya, also at Kṛṣhṇa's instance. The Purāṇic descriptions of these vanished ancient buildings "designed by Titans and finished by jewellers" seem to have spurred Shahjahan to emulation in the Taj Mahal.

His skill in the breeding and training of horses was such that the names of his four favourites have come down to us: Shaibya, Sugrīva, Megha-pushpa and Balāhaka. It seems that with the help of these he used to cover the distance between Inḍra-prasṭha (Delhi) and Ḍwārakā in a week, a *saṭṭāha*. Kāthiawāri horses are even now famous for their going powers; and the *Brahma Purāṇa* mentions by name a famous mare also of Kṛṣhṇa's time belonging to Prasena, a relative of his.

बड़वा हृदया नाम शतयोजनगामिनी ।

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"The mare, Hriḍayā, which could go one hundred *yojanas* (equal to about 800 miles) continuously." Those who know of the long-distance riding feats, in the "bush," of Australian riders and their horses, will not feel sceptical.

His favourite aeroplane was known as the Garuda, with which he seems to have kept in constant touch by means of some wireless telegraphy—as the big air-ship of one of his most implacable enemies, Shālva (whom he ultimately destroyed together with the air-ship), was known as the Saubha.

He introduced new flowers like the *pārijāṭa* into the country, undertaking even a sharp little war for the purpose, which the books hyperbolically speak of as a war with Indra, to bring away the plant from "heaven" (some other country of the earth, especially fine in those days, seems to be meant), at the instigation of his very favourite and very forward wife Satya-bhāmā. His care and taste in dress are shown by the fact that he generally wore yellow silk, as his elder brother, Bala-rāma, wore blue. In those days they knew and took care to select the colour that suited their

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complexions,[1] for the cult of physical masculine beauty—to say nothing of feminine, which was a matter of course—was fairly widespread in that day. Kṛṣhṇa's son Praḍyumna and grandson Aniruḍḍha (reincarnations of Bharaṭa and Shaṭrughna) and cousin Nakula were other famously handsome men of the time, next only after Kṛṣhṇa; and the *Mahā-bhāraṭa* describes many other men of grand physique.

[1] Bala-rāma was very white which is well understood; but Kṛṣhṇa seems to have had some extraordinary colour which the old books dwell on frequently and try to present to the mental vision of the reader or hearer by means of many similes, now the *aṭasī*-flower, now the new rain-cloud, now the emerald, now the sapphire. A great many Indian babies are born to-day with a patch of *greenish-bluish* tint on the lower portion of the back, extending over the nates, which is very pretty if the general colour of the baby is fair-white or yellowish-golden. If that tint could be spread all over the body, it would make a Kṛṣhṇa. There is an anthropological theory about this tint-patch on babies that it means a mixture of Mongol blood in the past; but whether well- or ill-founded is not yet settled. Herr Baelz has propounded the theory. It is said that every Chinese, every Korean, Japanese, and Malay is born with a dark blue patch of irregular shape in the lower sacral region; and that these patches generally disappear in the first year of life, but sometimes they last for several years. It is worth enquiring whether any European babies also have such patches, as a matter of anthropology; and *why* they occur, and disappear, as a matter of physiological chemistry.

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He married eight wives, carefully selected, and every one of them won by a great feat of strength or courage. While in sheer size of thews and sinews and strength of muscle, four men were noted beyond the common in his day, yet still such was the miracle of Kṛṣṇa's vital vigour that even in this respect he was regarded as simply above and beyond comparison.

The *Mahā-bhārata* says :

सांप्रतं मानुषे लोके सदैत्यनरराक्षसे ।
चत्त्वारस्तु नरव्याघ्रा बले शक्रोपमा भुवि ॥
उत्तमप्राणिनाम् तेषां नास्ति कश्चिद् बले समः ।
बलदेवश्च भीमश्च मद्रराजश्च वीर्यवान् ॥
चतुर्थः कीचकस्तेषां पंचमं नानुशुश्रुम ।
अन्योन्यानंतरबलाः परस्परजयैषिणः ॥

"In the whole of the human world at the present day, including the Ḍaiṭyas (or Negro ?), the Rākshasas (or Mongolian ?) and the Aryan races, four men, Bala-rāma, Bhīma, Shalya and Kīchaka are the strongest, in the respective order mentioned." And in explanation of the last line, we have the *Hari-vamsha* verse which says that Bala-rāma often defeated

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Bhīma in wrestling, and gave lessons to him, as also to Duryoḍhana, in the art of fighting with the mace.

येन नागायुतप्राणोऽसकृद् भीमः पराजितः ।

A Purāṇic story, with a metaphysical and possibly also a historical and sociologial significance, may be given here. The coastal island (like modern Bombay) on which Kṛṣhṇa founded and built his city of Ḍwārakā (which was swallowed up by the sea after the passing of Kṛṣhṇa, and some remains only of which are said to continue now at the place known by the name of Ḍwārakā) was once the site of a great capital-city known as Kusha-sṭhalī, which had flourished and disappeared long ages before. A king of ancient Kusha-sthalī, named Kakuḍmī, had a daughter named Revaṭī. And as it has always been difficult, in all ages and all countries, to get just the right kind of husband for one's daughter, King Kakuḍmī suffered from that difficulty also. He thought, since one *has* to consult others about such affairs, why not go to the fountain-head at once? And off he went, with his daughter under his arm, to Brahmā, the Creator

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of the world-system. Now, Brahmā happened to be witnessing an elaborate dancing-performance given by the *apsarās*, the light-limbed nymphs of heaven. So the King stood quiet near Brahmā, as etiquette required, awaiting a convenient opportunity. One occurred shortly: an interval of rest for the dancers. He at once saluted and broached his affair, Brahmā smiled graciously and said: "But while you have been watching this vast dance of the heavenly bodies for a brief minute, many æons of human days have passed away on that very small one of these bodies, the Earth; and your kingdom has vanished. Yet, go back quickly; Bala-rāma or Sankarshaṇa (Attraction, Gravitation), who is a piece of the Mahā-ḍeva (*Ahamkāra-Ruḍra* or Self-asserting Egoism) principle which, as the thousand-headed cyclic force called the Great Serpent Ananṭa, the 'endless,' maintains the Earth in her proper position in the heavens, has just taken birth there, for certain special reasons concerned with the making and regulating of human history. By the time you arrive there, he will have grown up to be of marriageable age, and you will find him in a

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new and greater town which has sprung up on the site of your old town. He is the only human being of this terrene age who has size enough to be a good match for your daughter who belongs to the terrene age of giants. Now, make haste." And Kakuḍmī rushed back with his daughter under his arm as before. But big as Bala-rāma was, Revaṭī was still a little too high. But he liked her nice face and nice manners. So he put his favourite war-weapon, a huge peculiar-shaped "plough-share-and-husking-pestle" on the top of the girl and she promptly telescoped down to the size he wanted. And he married her. And they were very happy ever after.

There are many astronomical cycles; one sidereal year is said to be equal to about twenty-six thousand terrene-human years, and a highly advanced Individual Consciousness may be able to keep simultaneous touch with two planes of matter and two counts of time. It is also possible that Revaṭī was a descendant of some colonisers who went off from ancient Kusha-sthali to some South Sea islands (where there still are some gigantic tribes) and happened to come to Ḍwārakā

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with her father in consequence of old traditions preserved by her tribe, in that island, and was married to Bala-rāma after initiation in the ways of an agricultural civilisation.

In connection with Kṛṣhṇa's household life —and it was a most enormous household—a comparatively little known chapter of the *Mahā-bhāraṭa* (Shānṭi-parva, ch. 81) deserves attention, for its comic humour as well as its deep instructiveness. Says Kṛṣhṇa to Nāraḍa: "You are my very confidential friend, and are very learned and wise and experienced as well. Therefore I will unburden myself to you about a very secret matter. This great family and clan of mine—they call me Lord, Lord, all right enough, but in reality I am a veritable slave to them in the mask of their master. The only enjoyment allowed to me is to listen to their hard words and constant complaints.

दास्यमैश्वर्यवादेन ज्ञातीनां वै करोम्यहम् ।
अर्धं भोक्तास्मि भोगानां वाग्दुरुक्तानि च क्षमे ॥

"My elder brother Bala-rāma can think of nothing else than his muscles and his fine wines; delicacy and fastidiousness are finished

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and exhausted in Gaḍa; Praḍyumna is enamoured of his own pretty face; and no one ever dreams of helping me in my endless cares and worries. Āhuka and Akrūra are always quarrelling with each other, and between them I feel like the mother of two gamblers who is constantly wishing that one may win and the other not lose. I cannot do without them, and with them life is not worth living. Can you help me?" And Nāraḍa gives him this very cheerful consolation: "There are two kinds of misfortunes, Kṛṣhṇa! One comes from without, and the other is created by oneself. Your misfortunes are of your own creation! You ought to have taken the throne yourself, after slaying that tyrant Kamsa. But no, you must go and bestow it on Ugrasena, the doting old father of Kamsa. And now you cannot take it back gracefully any more than a man can again eat the food he has thrown up. Your only resource now is to bear it all with patience and try to cut the tongue of invective with the soft knife that is not made of iron." "And pray what may that be?" asked Kṛṣhṇa. Said Nāraḍa: "Soft words in return for hard, and gifts

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in return for thefts; that is the only way to deal with kinsmen. No one without a great soul, without perpetual self-sacrifice, without much patient wisdom, without trusty friends, may hold together such huge clans and nations and affairs as you have undertaken, and bring them all to successful issues and prosperities. But thou art laughing at me, my beloved Lord!, having successfully befooled the pupil into the attempt to teach his teacher and the teacher of the worlds by precept and example!"

There is much unnecessary controversy over Kṛṣhṇa's many wives and youthful loves. There is too much attack and too much defence. The *Bhāgavaṭa* itself raises the question and anwers it.

ईश्वराणां वचः सत्यं तथैवाचरितं क्वचित् ।
धर्मव्यतिक्रमो दृष्ट ईश्वराणां च साहसम् ।
तेजीयसां न दोषाय वह्नेः सर्वभुजो यथा ॥ and yet again,
ईश्वरैरपि भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाशुभं ।

"The precepts of the great are generally sound, but not so their example. They too have their sins and have to suffer for them.

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Follow the good in their example and not the bad." "Do as I say, not as I do."

In the *Ṭaiṭṭirīya Upanishaṭ*, the Āchārya, at the time of the *samāvarṭana* (the University Convocation and degree-conferring ceremony of that time), says to the pupil:

यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि तानि त्वयोपास्यानि, नो इतराणि।

"Dear pupil!, copy in your own life only that much of our conduct which is good, and not that in it which is bad."

Kṛshṇa's life was by no means all roses. He had and made many enemies, and while he overcame most of them, he could not always have it his own way. His first-born infant son was carried away by a powerful ocean-pirate of the day, Shambara,[1] from the

[1] Described as a ḍaiṭya, or asura, probably belonging to some then powerful Assyrian (?Asura), Arabian, or Negro tribe. Even now the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea have Arabian pirates. From the political description of another exploit of Kṛshna's, *viz.*, his recovery of his teacher Sāndipani's son from "the regions of the dead," it may be inferred that the boy, while bathing in the sea, at Prabhāsa, was carried off by another ocean-pirate, using some sort of *sub-marine* (अंतर्जलचर: is the word used), and left on an island, or in some *southern* country, described as Yama's land. (*Bhāgavaṭa*, X, ch. 45.)

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sea-town of Ḍwārakā. And Shambara kept the child successfully away from the parents, in a secure island, fostering him as his own child because of his extraordinary beauty, till Praḍyumna grew up and came to learn the truth of his parentage and married secretly his captor-host's daughter and ran off with her on some sort of air-car (—mention of such air-cars is repeatedly made in the Purāṇas[1]—) and arrived in

[1] The *Matsya Purāṇa*, ch. 138, describes a war in the air between the devas under Shiva and the asuras under Ṭripura, both belligerents riding huge air-ships, over a great stretch of ocean, and a corresponding war between the sharks, in the seething waters underneath, over the corpses of the warriors as they fell from the air into the ocean.

ईश्वरामोदिताः सर्व उत्पेतुश्चाम्बरे तदा ।
पूर्व्वेदेवाश्च देवाश्च सूदयंतः परस्परम् ॥
निपतंत्यर्णवजले भीमनक्रतिमिंगिले ।
जग्रसुस्तिमयो दैत्यान् द्रावयंतो जलेचरान् ॥
मृधं यथासुराणां च प्रमथानां प्रवर्त्तते ।
अंबरेऽम्भसि च तथा युद्धं चक्रुर्जलेचराः ॥
यथा भ्रमंति प्रमथाः सदैत्यास्तथा भ्रमंते तिमयः सनक्राः ।
यथैव छिन्दन्ति परस्परं तु तथैव क्रंदन्ति विभिन्नदेहाः ॥
व्रणाननैरंगरसं स्रवद्भिः सुरासुरैर्नक्रतिमिंगिलैश्च ।
कृतो मुहूर्त्तेन समुद्रदेशः सरक्ततोयः समुदीर्णतोयः ॥

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Ḍwārakā by his own enterprise and valour. The fate of Kṛṣhṇa's kith and kin, and of his relatives and dependants, after his passing from the earth, is also very unfortunate and very saddening. The end of Kṛṣhṇa's own body by the arrow of a fowler, who mistook a movement of his foot for that of an animal, as he sat tranced in meditation, hidden amidst shrubs near the seashore, after that awful mutual slaughter of kinsfolk, and himself withdrawing his *prāṇas* from his body—was arranged in expiation of his slaying of Bāli from a hiding-place in his previous incarnation as Rāma ; so say some of the Purāṇas.

A study of the life of Kṛṣhṇa shows at once that it was exceedingly rich in emotion. As there are countless shades of colours, countless tones and overtones and kinds and degrees of voices and sounds, so there are countless shades of the love-emotion (and unfortunately but inevitably, of the hate-emotion also). Every human relationship, husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, grandson, granddaughter, and every one of the kinds and degrees of kinsman, relative,

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friend, master, servant, embodies a shade, vivid or mild, of such emotion. The life of Rāma by Vālmīki lastingly depicts those of the more prominent relationships ; different types of husband and wife, of co-wife and co-wife, of brother and brother, of parent and child, of master and servant, of teacher and pupil, of king and people, of foeman and foeman, of rival and ally, of friend and friend, of super-ordinate and sub-ordinate, of co-ordinate and co-ordinate, and so forth. But the life of Kṛṣhṇa as unfolded in the Purāṇic works and in the works of the later writers of the various schools of *bhakṭas*, illustrates with extraordinary richness, very many more beautiful shades and grades of *bhakṭi*. Kṛṣhṇa's relations with his adoptive parents, his boy-companions, the dairymaids, his parents proper, his "college" friend Suḍāmā, with Vyāsa, Nāraḍa, Arjuna, Bhīshma, with Arjuna's brothers, with his aunt Kunṭī, with Ḍraupaḍī, with Viḍura, Uḍḍhava, Akrūra, with his elder brother Bala-rāma, with his different sons and daughters and grandchildren, with his wives severally, Rukmiṇī and Saṭya-bhāmā chief among them—each one of these shades of the

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love-emotion makes subject for interesting, instructive and elevating psychological study, and is dealt with in the literatures of the many "schools" or sects of *bhakti* which have taken birth and grown up in the subsequent centuries. His dealings with his enemies similarly illustrate his stately treatment of the hate-emotion. When he goes to Dhriṭa-rāshtra, as ambassador of the Pāṇḍavas, to make a last vain effort to ward off war, Ḍuryoḍhana invites him to be his guest. He declines.

संप्रीतिभोज्यान्यन्नानि आपद्भोज्यानि वा पुनः ।
न च त्वं प्रीयसे राजन् न चैवापद्गता वयम् ॥

"The bread offered by friendship may be eaten, O King!, or the bread brought by misfortune. Thou bearest us no love, and we are not stricken by misfortune!" And he goes uninvited to Viḍura's house and stays there, for Viḍura loves him. Kṛṣhṇa offers boons to Viḍura at parting; and the dear old gentleman asks this boon: "May there always be affection between thee and me, and may my house never lack worthy guests and lots of roly-poly babies and plenty of nice things for them all to eat!".

अस्तु मे त्वयि रतिः सुताकुलं भोज्यमप्यतिथिसंकुलं कुलम् ॥

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Kṛṣhṇa's deferential treatment of those elders who, for special reasons, fought *against* him and his dear friends, the Pāṇḍavas, in the great war, but loved and honoured him and them all the same, and wished them victory all the time—is another great lesson in that deliberately dramatic manner of high chivalry in which great and advanced souls treat the tragi-comedy of this world's procession of events.

The Samskṛṭ Science of Rhetoric says that "emotional enjoyment is the soul or essence of poetry," and, indeed, of all fine art; and it subdivides this enjoyment, *rasa*, into nine principal kinds of motifs or interests. Some verses of the *Bhāgavaṭa* show that Kṛṣhṇa, as a theme for poetry, exhausted all these in himself. The occasion is the then very young Kṛṣhṇa's entry into the arena of the tournament which had been planned by Kamsa in a last effort to murder him, but at which he himself was slain by Kṛṣhṇa. Kṛṣhṇa enters, carrying on one shoulder a great tusk torn from the elephant Kuvalay-āpīda, which had been stationed at the gateway to kill Kṛṣhṇa, but which had been killed by him. "To the

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gladiators pitted against him, he appeared *Fierce* and *Furious* as the thunderbolt of heaven; to the masculine spectators, as *Wonderful* specimen of perfect manhood; to the women, as the *Beautiful* Eros incarnate; to the cowherds, as playmate full of *Laughter* and *Fun*; to the vicious kings assembled there, as *Heroic* chastiser of the wicked; to his parents, also present there, as precious child, object of tender *Compassion*; to Kamsa, as the *Terrible* Lord of Death himself; to the shallow-minded, as *Disgustingly* stained with the stains of battle; to the *yogis*, as the embodiment of the *Peace* of the Universal Self, the eternal object of single-minded *Devotion*; and as their idolised personal deity, the focus of their whole-hearted *Affection*, to his kinsfolk of the Vṛṣhṇi clan."

मल्लानामशनिर्नृणां नरवरः स्त्रीणां स्मरो मूर्त्तिमान्
गोपानां स्वजनोऽसतां क्षितिभुजां शास्ता स्वपित्रोः शिशुः।
मृत्युर्भोजपतेर्विराडविदुषां तत्त्वं परं योगिनां
वृष्णीनां परदेवतेति विदितो रंगं गतः केशवः॥

Bhāgavaṭa.

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रौद्रोऽद्भुतश्च शृङ्गारो हास्यो वीरं दया तथा ।
भयानकश्च बीभत्सः शान्तः सप्रेमभक्तिकः ॥

Shrīḍhara's *Tīka* on the above.

The Eugenic Value of Kṛṣhṇa-Worship

It is obvious that the Kṛṣhṇa-avaṭāra was not immaculate like the Rāma-avaṭāra ; but, at the same time, there is clear indication in the *Bhāgavaṭa* that what are called Kṛṣhṇa's youthful loves did not go beyond violent flirtations, and a taste for group-dancing and singing, like the waltzes and quadrilles and fandangos and maypoles of the West, and the *kajli* and the *kolattam* of the northern and southern India of to-day. One of his many names and epithets, *viz.*, Achyuṭa, signifies "the chaste," "the continent". And the *Bhāgavaṭa* (III, ii, 26) says that he lived in the home of his adoptive father Nanḍa, tending cows, stealing butter, romping with girls, and battling with wild animals, only till the eleventh year of his life, going off to Maṭhura afterwards and thence to Ḍwārakā.

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ततो नन्दव्रजमितः पित्रा कंसाद् विबिभ्यता ।
एकादशसमास्तत्र गूढार्चिः सबलोऽवसत् ॥

If this be so, then his dancings and flirtings show nothing seriously wrong, but rather only a manifestation, even in early boyhood, of another aspect of Kṛṣhṇa's richly artistic and vital nature; and, in any case, he was perfectly correct and proper after his marriage, though that, of course, was very manifold—but that was in accordance with the then custom.

After leaving Vrindā-vana for Ḍwārakā, Kṛṣhṇa "turned over a new leaf," in modern colloquial phrase. He never returned to it again, although he had promised to the dairymaids that he would, shortly. This truant lover's promise he fulfilled vicariously, however, through his dear friend and pupil Uḍḍhava.[1]

[1] One or two Purāṇas make him redeem the promise personally; others say he met the girl-friends of his boyhood, later on in life, not in Vrindā-vana, but at another place of pilgrimage, to which both happened to have travelled for some holy-day. The anciency of Kṛṣhṇa-worship is attested from time to time by antiquarian finds, like those of the monolithic column dedicated to Vasudeva, at Besnagar near Bhilsa in Central India, by a Greek envoy named Heliodoros, which scholars date between 140 and 130 B.C.

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That he did fulfil it thus and send much loving endearment and consolation and advice to the overfond girl-playmates of his boyhood, only shows his kind softness of heart, his recognition of responsibility, his wish to help and make amends. The "Bee-song," by Sūr Ḍās, of the maids' complaints to Uḍḍhava, is one of the finest pieces of work in Hindī poetry. The revival of Vrinḍā-vana by Chaiṭanya in the fifteenth century is the latest "return of Kṛshṇa" to it, after the devastation of the sister-town of Maṭhura by Mahmud of Ghazni in A.D. 1018, when it is said to have "contained nearly ten thousand temples".

Instead of vainly carping at his ways, and warping our own artistic faculties and potencies thereby, we ought to take from his exuberant and overflowing stores of all that is beautiful and joyous, as much as we can assimilate lawfully, for the purpose of enriching and refining our own emotional life and capacities, adding a manysided flavour to our domesticity, and thereby helping ourselves to realise an essential part of the first purpose of life, mentioned before.

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धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ *Gīṭā*, vii, 11.

बिभ्रद्वपुः सकलसुंदरसंनिवेशं
कर्माचरन् भुवि सुमंगलमाप्तकामः ।
कृत्वा निमित्तमितरेतरतः समेतान्
हत्वा नृपान् निरहरत् क्षितिभारमीशः ॥

Bhāgavaṭa, XI, i, 2—10.

"The oneness of the I manifests as the desire for oneness, for union, *i.e.*, as the lawful love of man and woman, O Arjuna!" "Kṛshṇa came to irradiate the life of this earth with the splendour of his physical vesture, wherein were gathered and concentrated the finest essences of all things that are most beautiful; so perfectly fulfilled was he in himself that he wanted nothing outside of himself, yet did he continuously discharge human duties and do acts of piety and merit for the instruction of others by his great example; wielding the kings of the earth as his playthings, he destroyed them by one another, in order to lighten the burden of the Earth."

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Truly, if sunsets and sunrises, if cloud and sea and snow-peak, if moon and star and bird and flower are worth looking upon, if we may without sin admire a fine horse, a beautiful mare, a magnificent tusker, a sleek and gentle milch-cow, a grand bull, why may we not admire far more, a beautiful human face and figure? But it ought to be admired *in the same spirit*, as a work of Nature's supreme art. For this purpose public opinion has to be carefully educated. There is too much license on the one side and too much puritanism on the other. If the proper wise middle course were followed there would be more joy in life, and there would be more human faces and features *worth* admiring and looking at again and again. For in the biological and psychological worlds, as in the economic, supply follows demand, and a whole nation's appreciation of and craving for physical, mental, and moral beauty, necessarily *creates* more and more of such beauty in each of its successive generations. The worship, by brides and bridegrooms, of Kṛṣhṇa as baby, as boy, as youth, and as great man, charming, fascinating, piquant, saucy, mischievous, wilful,

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maddeningly beautiful, hero of heroes, æsthete of æsthetes, teacher of teachers, grand in every respect, has its own most beneficent eugenic value for the nation, *if the worship be only duly intelligent*, and guided by just and righteous and wise elders, and not by knaves and hypocrites as it is so largely to-day, to the shame and the sorrow of the people. The worship of "heroes," and of "mother and child"—Gauri and Gaṇesha, Kausalya and Rāma, Yashoḍa and Kṛṣhṇa, Isis and Horus, Yashoḍharā and Rāhula, Venus and Cupid, Kwannon and Baby, Mary and Jesus, Fāṭimā and Hasan-Husain—in all religions, instinctively serves the same purpose. The *Vasanṭ-oṭsava*, or "the spring-festival," with its *Holikā-ḍāha* (bonfires to burn up the accumulated rubbish of the winter and make a general spring-cleaning) and its worship of the Chaṭuh-Shashti Ḍevī (the "goddess of the sixty-four fine arts" which subserve refined *Kāma*-enjoyment)—has similarly degenerated in modern India. The shell of the custom remains, the spirit has vanished. The refinements have gone, the coarsenesses have become accentuated. From being a carnival of delicate refinements and

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artistic enjoyments, it has become a carnival of indecent songs and conduct. It is matter for regretful surprise that the highly intelligent and scientific nations of the West should also have failed to profit by their researches in the ancient Greek cult of Beauty, and to initiate and pursue more systematic methods for their own physical improvement.

Incidentally, our younger generation may usefully make a careful study of the sizes and qualities of the physical bodies that the great men of history have worn.

Few great men of action, though some of thought and of art, have been puny or sickly or ill-formed and feeble. They have generally carefully educated and strengthened their bodies at least as much as their minds. And to the youth of India, the example of Kṛṣhṇa and his compatriots is as a shining light. The students in the higher classes might, with much profit, also study something of the birth-conditions and the personal habits and private life of the prominent figures of history. Abnormal, *i.e.*, extraordinary personages often have extraordinary birth-conditions, and these and their personal habits and conduct

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in dietary and sex-life throw a most valuable light on their achievements or failures.[1] The Purāṇa-Itihāsa are more "scientific" in this respect than many modern textbooks and, *if properly interpreted,* are seen to embody a "historical sense" which is finer, deeper-rooted, and more comprehensive and scientific and philosophical. They are honoured as "the fifth Veda," by tradition.

इतिहासपुराणं च पंचमं वेदानां वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि ।

Chhāndogya Upanishat.

Incidentally also it may be mentioned here, for the information of those who are inclined to see more vice than virtue in Kṛṣhṇa, that the private morals of such historical figures as Julius Cæsar and Alexander and Napoleon were incomparably worse, and even Aristotle sometimes joined in Alexander's revels. But despite all such weaknesses, which no doubt had bad effects on their work in life, we cannot but admire their great achievements. We ought to understand and recognise the

[1] "Tell me what a man eats and I will tell you what he is"—is a remark made by a Frenchman, Brillat-Savarin.

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strong points as well as the weak points, the good as well as the evil.

विद्वान् गुणज्ञो दोषज्ञः ।

"The wise man understands the virtues as well as the defects of things and persons." Some ill-advised and narrow-thinking Christian missionaries, misconceiving their duty to their own great Master, a true "son of God," *i.e.*, an avatāra in his own degree, think that they serve the Christ by slandering Kṛshṇa. If they came face to face with their Master, surely he would rebuke them greatly. The Christ cannot be exalted by the belittlement of Kṛshṇa. Different manifestations of God, for different purposes, have to be reverently studied from different points of view; they cannot all be measured off, offhand, by the same standard.

Kṛshṇa and Christ

From other and more generous points of view, parallels have now and then been attempted between the lives of Kṛshṇa and Christ. But they are very far-fetched. If we

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take a few selected incidents from each life, similarities may no doubt be found, especially if we follow those who think that the Biblical Christ is not a historical person, that Jesus was born 105 B.C. or so, and that Kṛṣhṇa also is a myth—the selected incidents being similar because they allegorise the same spiritual truths. But, then, for the purposes of the inner science, the birth, growth, struggles, decay, death, of a little plant, a worm, a man, *all equally* allegorise the one truth of all truths, *viz.*, the periodic descent of Spirit into Matter and its reascent thereout. Apart from this, and regarded as historical, the two lives are different as different can be. There is very little in common between the gentle ministry of Christ, extending over only three years out of the thirty-three of his life, and the tremendous all-comprehending activity of Kṛṣhṇa, throughout a very long life of the fullest and intensest kind. The one was essentially a soul-refining force, the other was that, and an immediate history-maker on a very large scale, and a philosophical and artistic teacher of the highest order, besides. Both taught, but the teaching was directed to different

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purposes. The former taught "Turn the right cheek," the latter "Therefore fight". And yet the two teachings are entirely in accord. For the former means "when the wrong is done to yourself," and the latter "when the wrong is done to another who is dependent on you for protection.". The former deals more with the individual in and by himself; the latter, more with the individual as a member of a community. The conditions, of the prevailing of *a-ḍharma* (sin) over *ḍharma* (virtue), in matters social, political, economical, amidst which the Christ arose and worked, were different from those amidst which Kṛṣhṇa arose and worked. The Christ strove to reform, by teaching and arousing, through precept and example, internal, subjective, individual intensity of *feeling*, of faith, hope, charity, self-purification, and devotion to the Father in Heaven (*Saviṭā Ḍevah* of the Gāyaṭrī) —all culminating in self-sacrifice. Kṛṣhṇa taught utmost self-sacrifice also, but as culmination of inner illumination, of *knowledge* of the Universal Self, and of the sense of duty born of that knowledge; and he strove to reform by external, objective adjustments of

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human affairs, by rewards and punishments, on an immense scale also. Christ taught *bhakṭi* to the Universal Father, and inspired personal devotion to himself; Kṛṣhṇa taught *jñāna* of the Universal Self and therefore Universal Love, and he inspired intense personal devotion also.

The Rationale of Ideals

More might be said of the devotion inspired by Kṛṣhṇa. But for that it is better to go to the great classical works direct, and to the *Bhāgavaṭa* more than any other work. Like all other men of action, and more than they in the degree of his greatness, Kṛṣhṇa inspired violent dislikes as well as likes. But the all-charitable, all-helping, ancient Science of the Spirit says that those who hated Kṛṣhṇa were as much helped in their soul-development as those who loved him. This seems to be a mystic mystery. But it is far from unintelligible. It is explained by superphysical science, which tells us that, just as in the physical world, patriarchs and their families, chiefs and their clans and tribes, elders and their

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communities and nations, stand in special relations of protectiveness and loyalty towards one another, even so specially advanced souls, *Īshvaras*, stand in special relations of helpfulness and devotion, along the path of psycho-physical evolution, with large groups of souls. It is also plain psychology. Thus.

'Nāraḍa says to Yuḍhishthira that when the object is truly great, it does not matter whether the bond with which you tie your soul to it is the bond of some form of the hate-emotion or some form of the love-emotion. The result will be good for you either way. It is enough that you *tie* yourself strongly to this great soul. But make sure that he *is* truly great and not a hollow pretender. He will do the rest. Of course you will have more pain along the one way than along the other. But dragged you will be, either way, to the right goal. The way of sin and pain may even be quicker, for life thereon is more intense, more "fast," and wears out the emotion-bonds that tie to the earth, more quickly and by powerful revulsion. Jaya and Vijaya, offered the option, by the dooming ṛṣhis, between *three* births as foes of Vishṇu, or *seven* as devotees, chose the former,

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and took birth as Hiraṇya-kashipu, Rāvaṇa, Shishupâla, etc.

गोप्यः कामाद् भयात्कंसो द्वेषाच्चैद्यादयो नृपाः ।
संबंधाद् वृष्णयो यूयं सख्याद् भक्त्या वयं विभो ॥

Bhāgavaṭa.

" By woman-love, by fear, by hate, by kinsmanship, by deep friendship, by whole-hearted devotion, have different souls clung to Him, and found Him."

In this way has Kṛshṇa received a worship and devotion which flourishes 5,000 years after his passing with an intensity unsurpassed, or even unmatched perhaps, in any time or clime.

Of course the deepest reason of such denouement is *in the soul of the votary himself*, the soul which makes the ideal object of its clinging a means for its own psychical exercise and strengthening.

यत्र यत्र मनो देही धारयेत् सकलं धिया ।
स्नेहाद् द्वेषाद् भयाद् वापि याति तत्तत्स्वरूपताम् ॥

Bhāgavaṭa.

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चित्तमेव हि संसारस्तत्प्रयत्नेन शोधयेत् ।
यच्चित्तस्तन्मयो भवति गुह्यमेतत्सनातनम् ॥

Maitrāyaṇi Upanishat.

यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौंतेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषः यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ *Gītā.*

"Whatsoever the embodied *jīva* puts its mind, its heart, into; whatsoever ideal, whatsover object of desire, it dwells upon, single-mindedly, whole-heartedly, whether by love, or by hate, or by fear—it puts on the form of, it becomes, that same ideal or object. The world-procession *is* mind; purify the mind therefore with all thy might; for the man becomes what he has in mind; especially when leaving the body at its death. The man *is* his wish, his aspiration."

In other words,

"Whatsoever thou lovest, that become thou must,
God if thou love God, dust if thou love dust."

The *mind* verily creates and *is*, the world.

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KṚṢHNA AS MASTER OF SUPERPHYSICAL POWERS

The *Shākṭa Āgama* says that the human *jīva* passes through three stages in evolution: (1) the *pashu* or "animal"-man; (2) the *vīra* or "hero"-man; (3) the *ḍivya*, or "god"-man. The divine man, the superman, has superphysical powers, subtle sensor and motor faculties with reaches beyond the "hero's". These are either congenital (and persons born with such extraordinary faculties are said to belong to the ṛṣhi-class of *jīvas*[1]), or are developed by special exercises and experiences of *ṭapasyā* (ascetic practices) and *yoga* in this life. If they have been worked at in previous lives, they appear congenitally in this, or, in any case, their revival or further development

[1] Compare the saying: नार्वाचीनेषु ऋषयो जायंते, "ṛṣhis are not born among the latter-day degenerates"; or, ऋषीणां च नदीनां च जन्मस्थानं न लक्ष्यते, "the birth-place of ṛṣhis, as of rivers, is not easy to ascertain." Many grades of *ṛṣhis* and *munis* are distinguished in the books. It should be noted that the presence of some abnormal powers of second-sight, etc., without high intellectual development and moral qualities, may be found among degenerates and savages also, sometimes. To make the ṛṣhi, high moral and intellectual as well as superphysical qualities are needed.

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becomes easier ; for all faculties or powers are already present in the Self, and therefore in every self or *jīva*, but the manifestation of any and every one of them is matter of perfection of, and adjustment and co-ordination between, the subtler (*kāraṇa* and *sūkshma*) bodies, which the *jīva* brings over from the "other worlds," and the physical dense (*sṭhūla*) body which it finds here.

Of course, the "great soul," going to incarnate on earth for a special purpose, seeks out the family, and therein the parents, most favourably constituted psycho-physically for its requirements. But, from the nature of things, ṛṣhi-families cannot be common, or even frequent, in a human race which is so defective and overpowered by *a-ḍharma* (sin) as to need an avaṭāra to uplift it into *ḍharma* (virtue) again. At the same time, a *human* race can, ordinarily, be helped properly only by one who is *human* as well as superhuman. And it happens also that, since Nature is made up of opposites, *ḍvam-ḍvam*, twos and twos, (though only one of a pair predominates at any given time and place), therefore when *a-ḍharma* prevails, *ḍharma* is not, cannot be,

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wholly destroyed, but is focused, necessarily, into powerful "seeds" here and there, from which its great "banyan-trees" must arise again to spread their branches over the world. Therefore in times of great and widespread lawlessness, disorder, and sin, *dharma* and wisdom and physical and superphysical powers become concentrated in families here and there, in potentiality. And the finest-grained physical body available in such, with reference to its requirements, is taken by the great soul to begin with (though there are violent exceptions also, and saints are sometimes born in a family of sinners, like embodiments of its conscience). Yet it also always needs to be further trained and perfected up to those requirements, by special baptism, initiation, vows, fasts, vigils, periods of retirement from the busy haunts of men, ascetic austerities, solitary meditations, trances, communion with high beings of other worlds, with Nature, with Cosmic Life and Consciousness.[1]

We therefore generally find periods of such retirement and ascetic practices, and

[1] उपनयन, दीक्षा, व्रत, उपवास, जागरण, एकांतवास, तपस्या, ऋषिचर्या, संयम, ध्यान, धारणा, समाधि, सिद्धदर्शन, देवसंगम, आत्मलाभ.

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consequent extensions of faculty and mystical experiences of various kinds and degrees, in the lives of almost all extraordinarily great men. The biography of Kṛṣhṇa contains many periods of intense *ṭapasyā* and meditation, deliberately undergone for further perfecting of his "vehicles," over and above the specially favourable conditions secured by the captivity of his parents (themselves reincarnations of the primeval ṛṣhis, Kashyapa and Aḍiṭi, to whom he was born as Upendra-Vāmaṇa, and of the still earlier ṛṣhis Suṭapā and Pṛṣhni to whom he was born as Pṛṣhnigarbha, according to the Purāṇas), their consequent high-strung nervous psycho-physical condition, their intensely prayerful mood, and their longing for the foretold birth of one who would deliver not only them but the whole world, and not only from physical and political bondage to tyrants, but also spiritual bondage. By such *ṭapasyā* he further refined and perfected his already gloriously splendid body into a fit instrument for the manifestation of marvellous superphysical as well as physical powers.

We may note that while the ṛṣhi is, ordinarily, a man of thought, a teacher, and

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therefore does not need much physical muscular vigour, Kṛṣhṇa had to work pre-eminently as both man of thought and of action. Hence his need for exceptional subtle as well as exceptional physical body, in keeping with his exceptional greatness as avaṭāric-*jīva*, "a hair from the head of Nārāyaṇa," "a ray of the Sun-centre". He gave illuminating visions to his parents, his nurse-mother Yashoḍa, and his friends Arjuna and Nāraḍa. He gave terror-striking visions to the evil-minded Ḍuryoḍhana and others. He saw from Ḍwārakā, a thousand miles away, Ḍraupaḍī's agony of shame, and heard her cry to him for help, in Hasṭināpur, when Ḍus-shāsana, at the bidding of his elder brother Ḍuryoḍhana, who had won her from Yuḍhishthira in that mad game of dice, endeavoured to denude her as a slave, in the assembly-hall[1]; and he answered the cry also,

[1] It seems that, as later among the "civilised" Romans, there were women-slaves as well as men-slaves in India in those days; and that they were kept more or less bare-bodied; but not wholly so. There does not seem to be any mention of such utter nudity of slaves in India, in the old books. But, even so, it is quite evident, through all the glamour of Vyāsa's grand Samskṛṭ, that, together with a very high

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and, across all that distance, either hypnotised Ḍus-shāsana and the whole assembly, or actually "multiplied" and lengthened endlessly (as the books say), by instantaneous materialisation, her cloth at which he was pulling. He also "multiplied" the minute remains of the food cooked by Ḍraupaḍī, in order to enable her to feed and mollify the very choleric and curse-ful ṛṣhi Ḍurvāsā and his many disciples, (as the Christ, later, multiplied the loaves and fishes). He projected his own and also his beloved friend Arjuna's *sūkshma-sharīra-s* (subtle bodies) on certain occasions of profound disturbance of mind and intensity of emotion. He appeared simultaneously in many places

development of all kinds of arts and luxuries and weapons of warfare, there was much coarse living and sensual and even brutal indulgence, in those days, drinking and dicing and lusting, even as to-day in the great capital-towns of the West and the East; with apparently this difference that the brutality was more frank and openly recognised by convention in those days, while nowadays it is more covered with films of decorum and is mostly confined to "the night-side" of the great cities. The *yaksha-s* and *raksha-s*, evil microbes, disease-germs, evil passions, fiends and hobgoblins, and beasts of prey—all grow more powerful in the dark, when the Sun's rays, "angels," *ḍeva-s*, are not fighting with and destroying or at least suppressing them.

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on other occasions. He healed the sick and straightened the deformed by that radiant vital magnetism which made his caressing touch pour health into the ill and make them whole, and fill with blissful intoxication the whole who had the rare fortune to be near and dear to him. He also, on rare occasions, brought back the dead to life, where, apparently, the link between the subtle and the dense bodies had not been wholly broken, by that same magnetic power and will-force. He laid dooms upon specially grievous sinners, as of prolonged wandering in spiritual and physical misery upon Ashvaṭṭhāmā, the killer of infants and sleepers. Such things are said of him by written and spoken tradition, and naturally and justly belong to him as a superman.

His mastery of martial weapons, whether "secret," *aṣṭra-s*, or plain, *shaṣṭra-s*, like the bow-and-arrow, the mace, the sword, and his special favourite, the *chakra* or discus (which seems to have been *aṣṭra* as well as *shaṣṭra*), need not be particularly dwelt on in this connection. That mastery, no doubt, was personal and unique, and outdistanced even Arjuna's and Bhīshma's and Ḍroṇa's. Still, it does not

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seem to have been specially connected with any superphysical quality, for the use of such "secret" *aṣṭra-s* was common to all the *mahā-raṭha-s*, the great warrior-heroes, the "chivalrous knights," of that day. The recent lethal inventions of Europe for purposes of war make the Purāṇic *aṣṭra-s* look less hyperbolical than they formerly did.

Kṛṣhṇa as Man of Knowledge and Teacher

Finally we may see Kṛṣhṇa as one of the greatest of teachers.

While his beauty of form remains only as a tradition, and alas !, there is no authentic portrait available either on canvas or in marble, no true *chiṭra* or *praṭimā*, to show us concretely what that marvel was like, while his deeds remain only in results long overlaid by other events, the wisdom of his teachings remains to us in direct form. Even in his boyhood and youth he was a zealous reformer of religion. He battled bravely, as a boy, against the prevalent excessive and sensuous (or when perversely misinterpreted then even positively corrupting)

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Vedic formalism and ritualism; warred upon vested priestly or rather priestcrafty interests and pretensions; successfully abolished the Indra-*makha* with its blood-sacrifices and libations and potations; and established, instead, the more rational cult of the cow, so eminently suited to an agricultural civilisation. This open condemnation of hypocritical, cunning, selfish and senseless or perverse and depraved sacerdotal formalism, and of the endeavour to hypnotise the people with the mere outer word of the Veda, is briefly but strongly repeated by him, in his later teaching of the *Gītā* (ch. ii, 42-53) also, and explained more fully in the *Bhāgavata* (XI, chs. v, xxi, etc.).

श्रौतेन जन्मनाऽथापि मुह्यंत्याम्नायवादिनः ।
कर्मण्यकोविदाः स्तब्धाः मूर्खाः पंडितमानिनः ॥
फलश्रुतिं कुसुमितां न वेदज्ञा वदंति हि ।
कामिनः कृपणा लुब्धाः पुष्पेषु फलबुद्धयः ॥
अग्निमुग्धा धूमतांताः स्वं लोकं न विदंति ते ।
न ते मामंग जानंति हृदिस्थं य इदं यतः ॥

Beyond and above all his other great works, stands his work as the teacher of the *Gītā*, wherein he concentrated, with the electrical focusing

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of war conditions, the quintessence of the deepest, the most ancient, and the most practical and real ethics and philosophy, into a few hundred verses, for the enlightenment of the sorely perplexed understanding of Arjuna and of hundreds of subsequent generations. The *Mahā-bhāraṭa* incorporates another utterance of Kṛṣhṇa—also in the shape of teaching given to his dearest friend Arjuna—and known as the *Anu-gīṭā*. But this work is not much studied, although it seems to be almost indispensable for the right understanding of the *Gīṭā*. It is expressly a reutterance of and a supplement to the earlier work and embodies much more systematic philosophy.

The circumstances in which this luminous discourse was given may be mentioned. After the great war, Kṛṣhṇa dwelt with the Pāṇḍavas, helping them to reorganise the disturbed *rāshtra*, the state, and set it all in order. Then, one day, wandering about in the halls and gardens of Iṇdra-prastha, he said to his beloved friend Arjuna: "Many days have I dwelt here, dear friend, because I take joy in seeing thee. But Bala-rāma and my many kinsfolk and large household at Ḍwārā-waṭī

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wish to see me, and I must go to them now." And Arjuna was depressed, and said: "Yes, I see you must go. But before you go, tell me again what you told me on the battle-field for the enlightenment of my bewildered mind. I seem to have lost it all amidst the subsequent distractions. But my mind craves after those deep inner things again and again."

तत्सर्वं पुरुषव्याघ्र नष्टं मे व्यग्रचेतसः ।
मम कौतूहलं त्वस्ति तेष्वर्थेषु पुनः पुनः ।
भवांस्तु द्वारकां गंता न चिरादिव माधव ॥

Anu-gīṭā, ch. i.

Then Kṛshṇa: "Now I like it very ill that thou hast dull-wittedly let go the eternal secret and sacred wisdom that I gave to thee then. I was in a high mood of *yoga* at that time, and the memory will not come back to me. Thou art surely lacking in faith and very lacking in intelligence. It is not possible for me to repeat it all over again exactly. But I will tell thee, instead, a historical dialogue which will equally enlighten thy mind and help thee to attain the goal." All which scolding of poor Arjuna does not seem very reasonable,

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though very human, and very characteristic of benevolent teachers. When Kṛṣhṇa himself had forgotten what he had said and found it impossible to repeat it, it was hard on Arjuna to be reprimanded for doing the same thing! But great men may do what smaller men may not. And Kṛṣhṇa went on to deliver the *Anugīṭā*, which is more systematic than the other, and very illuminating. And fortunately for humanity, though the memories of both Kṛṣhṇa and Arjuna were so unreliable, Vyāsa has somehow managed to preserve both the first and the second *Gīṭā-s*.

Incidentally, in the authorship of these *Gīṭā-s*, we have an outstanding confirmation of the fact that no one can be an efficient professor of a subject unless he is in living touch with that department of the real daily communal or national life which he professes to study and teach; that philosophy, in order to be realised, in order to become real, must be not only thought out in closet or cave or other solitude, but must be drawn forth thence and tested on and applied to the battle-fields of life. And it is very characteristic of the Indian mind and culture and civilisation that the

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veteran generalissimo of a vast army, like Arjuna, should want to run away from the battle, at the last moment, because of ethical scruples, and should be fortified for fighting, by a metaphysical discourse, given then, on the Eternal Principles of the Universe.

The whole and sole teaching of the *Gīṭā* is the very pragmatic one: "Do your duty, after ascertaining it in the light of Āṭma-viḍyā —the all-co-ordinating all-illuminating science; and then do it without craving for fruit, fearless of consequences, sure that right resolve and right effort can never go in vain, but will always bring right result, soon or late." As occasion and condition for this final teaching of ethics, we have the doctrine of लोकसंग्रह, *loka-sangraha*, itself based on Āṭma-viḍyā, in the setting of which duties arise.

Duty, Organisation, Synthesis

Loka-sangraha means world-synthesis, the organisation of the human race, the assignment of each individual to his proper place, the division of labour, of remuneration, of means of livelihood, and of the rewards and

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prizes of life, in accordance with the natural division of temperaments and functions.

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ॥
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथाऽसक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥

"The wise man should act so that he may promote social organisation and co-operation, and not violate its principles." It should be noted, in this reference, that Kṛshṇa, in the *Gīṭā*, bases the "caste" system, not on "heredity," but on "spontaneous variation".

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥

"*Swa-bhāva*, *i.e.*, *Prakṛṭi*, the *Nature* of the Self, has three *guṇas*; their respective predominance makes the respective 'twice-born' class-castes, the man of thought (*saṭṭva*), the man of action (*rajas*), the man of desire (*ṭamas*), with the undifferentiated as a fourth; and the duties of the four are divided accordingly." The *Bhāgavaṭa* mentions *many* cases of change of caste. Thus the *Kshaṭṭriya* king Ṛshabha-ḍeva had a hundred sons, of whom eighty-one became *Brāhmaṇas*.

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एकाशीतिर् . . . ब्राह्मणा बभूवुः । (Sk. V, ch. 3.)

And, again,

गर्गाच्छिनिस्ततो गार्ग्यः क्षत्राद् ब्रह्म ह्यवर्त्तत ।
मुद्गलात् (क्षत्रियाद्) ब्रह्म निर्वृत्तं गोत्रं मौद्गल्यसंज्ञितम् ॥

"From the *Kshaṭṭriya* Shini was born Gārgya who became a *Brāhmaṇa* (and famous astrologer); and from the *Kshaṭṭriya* Mudgala was descended the clan of the Maudgalya *Brāhmaṇas*." (Sk. IX, ch. 21.)

When this social organisation and co-operation is just and natural, then everyone knows his duty clearly, and finds no difficulty in performing it. It is the business of the great man, the leader, the ruler, the man in power and authority, to secure this rational social organisation first of all. Then all good things else will add themselves. For only by such systematic and scientific organisation may the greatest happiness of the greatest number be achieved.

Not exclusiveness but synthesis is the key-note of the whole of the best Sanāṭana Ḍharma culture—whatever the character of its present degenerate form may be. Give

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everything, every idea, every custom, every person, its or his or her proper time and place and circumstance, and you develop the best that there is in it or him or her. Also, lay more stress on *duty* than on *right*—the *duty* of every *class* of individuals as well as of every individual. This is an essential characteristic of the Ancient Sanāṭana Ḍharma. The modern tendency is to lay more stress on the rights than on the duties of the individual, on the contrary. Right and Duty are the obverse and the reverse aspects of the same thing, Ḍharma or Law. Ḍharma (*ḍhri*, to hold and bind together), Law (*legere*, to bind), binds together a duty and a corresponding right, and it thereby binds together human beings also, in the bonds of such mutual rights-and-duties. Insistence on either will secure the other also, generally. But there is a difference. Children may be taught either by fear or by love. They may be led and attracted forwards, or pushed from behind. Is there any doubt as to which is the better way? Everybody insistently claiming and taking his rights from everybody else—this is one way of maintaining society. Everybody eagerly giving to everyone else

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the latter's dues, eagerly performing his own duties—this is another way of doing the same thing. Which is the better? Generally, in history, it is only when the so-called "higher," "upper," or stronger classes, in positions of power and authority, forget their own duties and the rights of others too much, that the others begin to reciprocate, and frictions and class-wars begin. For peaceful progress, it is absolutely necessary that each class and each individual should think more of its and his duties than rights.

The four psycho-physical types of men, the man of thought, the man of action, the man of desire, the undifferentiated and unskilled worker; the four kinds of special rewards, honour, power, wealth, and play; the four kinds of livelihood; the four corresponding vocational classes in each complete community; the four main interests or ends of life; the four corresponding stages in each lifetime —these are the main features of the synthetic scheme of rights and duties which had been disturbed by the excessive preponderance of the militarist elements in his day, and which Krshna sought to restore. This is not the

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place to expound them in detail.[1] Yet, as further illustration of the synthetic nature of Sanāṭana Ḍharma, we may note such facts as its synthesis (*not* mutual exclusion), of the four "colours" of human beings *in one community*, with necessary scientific safeguards against degeneration of specific characteristics by too indiscriminate marriages, its recognition of eight kinds of marriages, twelve kinds of sons, four kinds of funerals, each with its proper circumstance. Even in the matter of such an apparently slight but really important affair as salutation, we find many forms illustrated by Kṛṣhṇa. When he returns from Indra-prastha (Delhi) to Ḍwārakā, he greets his various kinsfolk, elders, equals, youngers, dependants, in various ways.

प्रह्वाभिवादनाश्लेषकरस्पर्शस्मितेक्षणैः ।

Bhāgavaṭa.

[1] The whole subject has been treated of at length, in the writer's *The Science of Social Organisation*, and in *The Science of Politics, in the Light of Brahma-Vidyā* (which appeared as a series of articles in the *Theosophist*, August, 1919, to March, 1920, but has not yet been published separately in book-form).

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On another occasion,

ततोऽवतीर्य गोविंदो रथात्स च युधिष्ठिरः ।
भीमो गांडीवधन्वा च यमौ सात्यकिरेव च ।
ऋषीनभ्यर्चयामासुः करानुद्यम्य दक्षिणान् ॥

Mahā-bhārata.

"By low obeisance, by spoken salutation, (*svāgaṭam*, 'welcome,' *su-prabhāṭam*, 'good morning'), by embrace, by handshake, by tender caress, by smile, by glance, by lifting the right hand, etc." Such are instances of लोकसंग्रह, which Kṛṣhṇa teaches by precept and by example.

RĀJA-ḌHARMA

The great teaching on the subject of *loka-sangraha* which Kṛṣhṇa gave in detail, not directly, himself, but by the mouth of Bhīshma, which is the completion of the teaching of the *Gīṭā*, and is its application to the administration of communal life—this teaching is unfortunately too much neglected in India, nowadays. At the beginning of the Mahā-bhāraṭa war comes the *Gīṭā* which nerves Arjuna for the struggle. At its end appropriately comes the teaching of

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Bhīshma to Yuḍhishthira, given and received by Kṛṣhṇa's express wish, on the all-important subject of the true Science and Art of Politics, दंडनीति, राजधर्म, राजशास्त्र, spiritualised by Āṭma-viḍyā—by means of which alone can the work of the reconstruction of a people shattered by a terrible internecine war, be successfully carried out, and Kṛṣhṇa's work as an avaṭāra be completed. By means only of a spiritualised policy, a spiritualised "politics-civics-economics," can a just and righteous great man, leader and ruler, make Saṭya-yuga out of Kali-yuga.

दंडनीत्यां यदा राजा सम्यक् कार्त्स्न्येन वर्त्तते ।
तदा कृतयुगं नाम कालः श्रेष्ठः प्रवर्त्तते ॥
दंडनीतिः स्वधर्मेषु चातुर्वर्ण्यं नियच्छति ।
लोकस्य सीमंतकरी मर्यादा लोकपावनी ।
सम्यङ्नीता दंडनीतिर्यथा माता यथा पिता ॥
मज्जेत् त्रयी दंडनीतौ हतायां सर्वे धर्माः प्रक्षयेयुर्विरुद्धाः ।
सर्वे धर्माश्चाश्रमाणां हताः स्युः क्षात्रे नष्टे राजधर्मे पुराणे ॥
सर्वे धर्मा राजधर्मेषु दृष्टाः सर्वा दीक्षा राजधर्मेषु चोक्ताः ।
सर्वा विद्या राजधर्मेषु युक्ताः सर्वे लोका राजधर्मे प्रविष्टाः॥

Mahā-bhāraṭa, Shānṭi-parva.

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"When the ruling element conducts the affairs of the people in accordance with a just and sound and far-sighted and all-comprehensive (and not patchwork, haphazard and opportunist) policy—then society is properly organised, with its four vocational classes duly articulated together, and each observing its duties in accordance with law and order. Such High Science of Policy, well and righteously administered, is even as father and as mother unto the people. All sciences subserve it; all laws and all high secrets are to be found in it; all the well-being of all humanity depends upon it. If it fail and fall from just and righteous wisdom, all social order would sink into confusion, and all science and art would disappear into chaos."

Such is the teaching indicated by Kṛṣhṇa himself directly, and given in greater detail by the mouth of Bhīshma; for Bhīshma, too, was a superman, and second only to Kṛṣhṇa.

The conditions in which this teaching was delivered are indicative of the quality of the giver. In his last great battle with Arjuna, the aged "grandfather" (openly desiring victory for the righteous Pāṇdava brothers,

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though bound by various reasons to fight on the side of their unrighteous cousins, the Kaurava brothers), smiling benignly, scolding Arjuna for not shooting his arrows more strongly, trying to provoke him to do so by his own hits, wishing to be overthrown by no lesser warrior than his favourite pupil and grandson Arjuna—Bhīshma, the rightful heir to the throne of Hastināpur, who, in his splendid youth gave up his right to it, in an instant, and took oath to remain unmarried and pure all his life, in order to enable his widowed father to marry, again, the woman whom he had chosen, but who would not marry him until the throne was assured to her progeny, not only as against claim by Bhīshma but also as against possible contest by any son of his—Bhīshma was ultimately pierced with so many arrows that he fell fainting from his chariot to the ground, towards the close of day. But yet his body could not touch the ground, because of the thickly projecting shafts—as quills from a porcupine, is the simile used in the epic. The battle halted for a moment. The warring cousins, and the other great leaders ran up.

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They wished to remove him; he commanded otherwise. They brought the most skilful surgeons; he declined their service. Death came to free him from his tortured body; no, Death must wait till the Sun turned to the north, for a *Yogī* like Bhīshma, master of life and death—he was one of the eight great "gods" who make the order of the Vasu-s in the divine hierarchy in the ancient Indian Pantheon, come to earth to play a part in the terrene portion of the world-drama, in consequence of a doom laid upon him by the sage Vasishtha (also a name for the Sun) for some passing manifestation of desire with respect to that same eternal "Earth-cow" (mentioned before)—a great soul like Bhīshma's must not leave the fleshly body till that auspicious season for voyaging back to the Sun came round. Also, the body, though tortured, had even more useful work to do yet than it had ever done before. And so, barricades were made, and watchers placed; and Arjuna made peculiar mechanical arrangements for drops of water to fall into his grandfather's mouth, as he lay on that bed of arrows, feeling no other want than that

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of the drinking water, which he would accept from no other hands than those of Arjuna; and the battle raged for eight more days all around him, and flickered out. Then Bhīshma called, in his soul, to Kṛṣhṇa. Kṛṣhṇa heard that superphysical cry as he was conversing with the desolate Yuḍhishthira, in the distant camp, trying to console the inconsolable king, demented by the awful slaughter of his nearest and dearest, kith and kin and relatives and friends, and the devastation of the whole country. Then, in order that himself may be near to his votary, that Yuḍhishthira may learn wisdom, and that Bhīshma's greatness and glory may also thereby receive its crown and be known to all the future generations, Kṛṣhṇa led Yuḍhishthira to the feet of the dying warrior, to be consoled, by learning anew, from his mouth, the principles of *Rāja-Ḍharma*, the Royal Science, the Science of Kings, the King of Sciences, which teaches how human affairs should be administered for the good of all human beings, and how all other sciences should be directed and utilised for that good. And a great company of venerable *ṛṣhis* and *munis*, sages and saints, as well

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as soldiers and householders, gathered round that wonderful god-man, and, in reverent silence—Yudhishthira questioning from time to time—heard the words of precious all-synthesising wisdom, issuing from his lips. And because rulers, put in a position of authority over men, are so apt to become intoxicated with power, and to think that that power comes to them by some birthright, some divine right of their own, for their own enjoyment, and does not come from the Divinity, the *Brahmā*, the Collective Mass-Mind, the Universal Mind, the *Mahat-Buddhi*, which is as much in the People as in them (मनो महान् मतिर्ब्रह्मा पूर्बुद्धिः ख्यातिरीश्वरः । *Vāyu Purāṇa*); because they so often forget that whatever power they have is entrusted to them by the explicit or the tacit Wish of the People, for the People's Welfaring—because of this danger, Bhīshma impressed upon Yudhishthira the duty of loving as well as fearing the People too, as Yudhishthira's other "grandfather" Vyāsa also impressed upon him on other occasions.

खनीनेत्रस्तु विक्रांतो जित्वा राज्यमकंटकम् ।
नाशकद्रक्षितुं राज्यं नान्वरज्यंत तं प्रजाः ॥

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तमपास्य च तद्राज्ये तस्य पुत्रं सुवर्चसम् ।
अभ्यषिंचंत राजेंद्र मुदिता ह्यभवंस्ततः ॥
स पितुर्विक्रियां दृष्ट्वा राज्यान्निरसनं च तत् ।
नियतो वर्त्तयामास प्रजाहितचिकीर्षया ॥
ब्रह्मण्यः सत्यवादी च शुचिः शमदमान्वितः ।
प्रजास्तं चान्वरज्यंत धर्मनित्यं मनस्विनम् ॥

(*Mahā-bhāraṭa*, Ashva-medha-parva, ch. 4.)

"Khanī-neṭra, the son of Vivimsha, failed in his duty of protecting and promoting the welfare of the People, and the People liked him not, and arose against him, and cast him out, and appointed his son Suvarchā in his place. And Suvarchā, beholding the fate of his father, took lesson from his vices and their consequences, and did his duty, and strove assiduously for the well-being of the People, and was full of all manly and kingly virtues, and the People rejoiced in him and with him, and loved him and helped him in all ways."

Such wise things Bhīshma taught to Yuḍhishthira until the fifty-eighth day after his fall from the war-chariot.

At the dawning of that day, they all gathered round him as usual, and Yuḍhishthira

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addressed him: "Open your eyes, dear grandfather and true King of the whole land! The blind king Ḍhriṭa-rāshtra and Yuḍhishthira salute you. The holy sages are present also, with the sacred fires of your house. And the lord of us all, Kṛṣhṇa-Vāsuḍeva, is here too. Instruct us in our duties." Then Bhīshma slowly opened his eyes and saw them all, and moving a little, and raising his arm, he spoke, in his own old voice of the rain-laden clouds. "I am glad thou hast come, and all these others. The million-rayed Lord of Heaven, who makes the day, has now turned to the north. Eight and fifty nights have I lain here over these sharp-pointed shafts, and the time has passed slow as a hundred years.

अष्टपंचाशतं रात्र्यः शयानस्य च मे गताः।
शरेषु निशिताग्रेषु यथा वर्षशतं तथा॥

I must pass on now to other worlds. Follow Ḍharma and be to the King Ḍhriṭa-rāshtra as a son, as I know thou wilt be". Then he turned to Kṛṣhṇa, and, with many words of glad and reverent praise, asked consent: "Give me permission, Kṛṣhṇa, to cast off this

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body of flesh ; with your consent alone, may I pass on to higher worlds."

स मां त्वमनुजानीहि कृष्ण मोक्ष्ये कलेवरम् ।
त्वयाऽहं समनुज्ञातो गच्छेयं परमां गतिम् ॥

And Kṛṣhṇa said : "I give thee permission ; go unto the Vasu-s, thou stainless soul, whose will the Lord of Death himself obeys." Then Bhīshma once again to all: "Follow the Truth always; strive for it ever, in thought and word and deed, O Children of the Bhāraṭa-Motherland ! Study the Infinite, be self-denying, be compassionate. That is the Ḍharma of all Ḍharmas. Where Kṛṣhṇa, the Universal Self, which attracts all to Itself (*karṣhaṭi sarvān*), is, there Ḍharma ever is ; and where Ḍharma is, there always is unfailing triumph."

सत्येषु यतितव्यं वः सत्यं हि परमं बलम् ।
आनृशंस्यपरैर्भाव्यं सदैव नियतात्मभिः ॥
ब्रह्मण्यैर्धर्मशीलैश्च तपोनित्यैश्च भारताः ।
यतः कृष्णस्ततो धर्मो यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ॥

And he closed his eyes again, and steadily gathered, by concentration, all his vital forces in the head, and thence passed out as a great

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light which rose into the heavens and disappeared in an instant. And even to this day, because Bhīshma had no son of his own body to offer him water, therefore all Indians who offer the prescribed ceremonial oblations to the departed, offer water unto him.

वैयाघ्रपाद्यगोत्राय सांकृतिप्रवराय च ।
अपुत्राय ददाम्येतत्सलिलं भीष्मवर्मणे ॥

So passed Bhīshma after having, as the crowning work of his life, reuttered to Yuḍhishthira, as a legacy and trust for all future generations, for the helping of mankind, the essential principles of a just and equitable division of the rights and duties of individuals as well as classes.

If any statesmen of to-day, when conditions are similar to those of Kṛṣhṇa's day, really want a reconstruction and a stable organisation of society, they would not altogether waste their time if they consulted those teachings of Rāja-Ḍharma for ideas and principles, instead of spending all their time in making economical and political experiments which take no account of human psychology or Āṭma-viḍyā, and lead only to vicious circles of farcical and

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tragical failures. If the life of Kṛṣhṇa is duly studied and the principles taught by him and his devotee Bhīshma are followed, then may much success in achieving human happiness be attained.

CONCLUSION

The story of Kṛṣhṇa is truly as instructive as it is sweet.

"May He inspire our minds with wisdom, He who is the Teacher of the Teachers; for, without that wisdom, we ever blindly take up courses of action which we fondly hope will bring us joy, but which always plunge us into only deeper miseries. No higher motive-force of work is there for us, than to dwell upon thy greatness, Lord! Do for us Thyself, whatever may be good for us, as wise and strong parents do for their unknowing and all-helpless children. The illustrious men of fame, the generous benefactors of their fellow-mortals, the men of open-handed charity, the strong-willed and self-denying ascetics of many vows and vigils, the seers of the Vedic hymns, the discoverers of great policies for guiding the affairs of men—none such attain success in

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their respective lines of work without they seek Thy help in silent prayer within the chamber of the heart. To think Thee, to sing Thee, to salute Thee, to worship Thee, to behold Thee—this cleanses hearts of sins at once. We bow before Thee, therefore, in loving adoration. Who can ever be surfeited with hearing of Thy works! Their infinite story distils nectar and ambrosia with every word into the minds of those that know its blissful taste. The Servants of the Lord who tell that deathless story, the Servants of the Lord who listen to it—they learn full soon the Oneness of the form-ful Finites with the Form-less Infinite, which is the One Sole Secondless and Otherless Unconscious Consciousness, I-Not-Another, enthroned in every living heart, in every atom-point, including all Space and all Time and all Motion within Itself, which the wise call by the names of Brahman and Paramātman and Bhagavān."

चरित पुनीत सुनत हरि के नित नित चित तृप्ति न जोहै ।
पद पद मे जाके निसरत रस रसिकन के मन मोहै ॥

वयं तु न वितृप्याम उत्तमश्लोकविक्रमे ।
यच्छृण्वतां रसज्ञानां स्वादु स्वादु पदे पदे ॥

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जनोऽबुधोऽयं निजकर्मबंधनः
सुखेच्छया कर्म समीहतेऽसुखम् ।
यत्सेवया तां विधुनोत्यसन्मतिं
धियं स नोऽव्यात् परमो गुरोर्गुरुः ॥
भवद्गुणानुस्मरणाद्दते सतां
निमित्तमन्यद् भगवन्न विद्यते ।
पिता चरेद् बालहितं यथा स्वयं
तथा त्वमेवार्हसि नः समीहितुम् ॥
यशस्विनो दानपरास्तपस्विनो मनस्विनो मंत्रदृशस्सुमंगलाः ।
क्षेमं न विंदंति विना यदर्हणं तस्मै सुभद्रश्रवसे नमो नमः॥
यद्वंदनं यत्स्मरणं यदर्हणं यत्कीर्त्तनं यच्छ्रवणं यदीक्षणं ।
जनस्य सद्यो विधुनोति कल्मषं तस्मै सुभद्रश्रवसे नमो नमः॥
जेइ दास भगवान कहैं यह जेइ दास भगवान सुनैं ।
तेइ चीन्हि भगवान गुनन कौ निर्गुन सगुन अभेद गुनैं ॥
वदन्ति तत्तत्त्वविदः तत्त्वं यज्ज्ञानमद्वयम् ।
ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्द्यते ॥

ॐ

सर्वस्तरतु दुर्गाणि सर्वो भद्राणि पश्यतु ।
सर्वः सद्बुद्धिमाप्नोतु सर्वः सर्वत्र नंदतु ॥

ॐ

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पं० इन्द्र विद्यावाचस्पति स्मृति संग्रह

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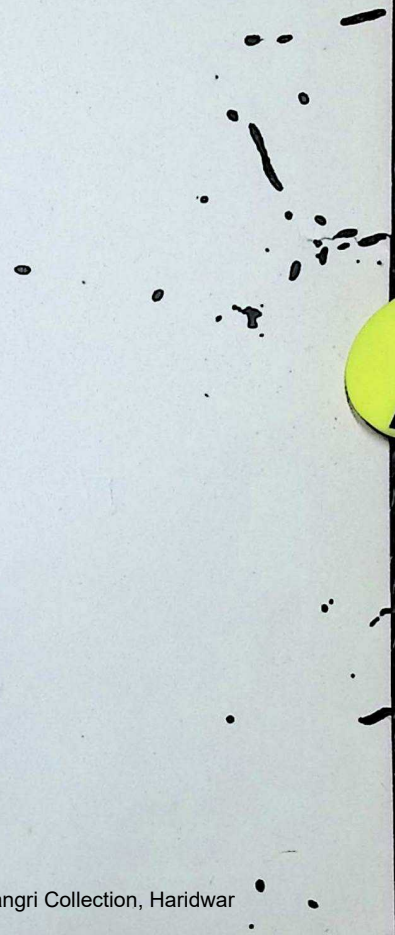

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